

Jim and Becky – Chapter 8 – Improvising

I just looked at him.

“I know, in the barn.”

“You’ve got it. Use sandbags to hold the canvas in place. There are enough rolls to cover the entire trench.”

“Anyone hear a weather report?”

“I think this storm took everyone by surprise.”

“Novel idea, but it won’t work,” Gene suggested.”

“Oh, why not?”

“The snow will make the tarps sag and pull them out from underneath the sandbags. Look at where you’ve already put the tarps, they’re sagging.”

“Never thought of that. Bail me out here.”

“How much plywood do we have?”

“Not nearly enough.”

“2x4s?”

“Not them either. However, I do have enough to put one every 10’.”

“Someone get the 2x4s out of the barn and start laying them down every 10’. Stretch the tarps tight and nail them in place. Stake every 3rd or 4th board so they don’t slide.”

“I’d have thought of that, you know.”

“When?”

“About the time we started shoveling the snow out of the trench. How come you never told me you saw the movie?”

“What movie?”

“The Gunny Highway movie.”

“You never asked.”

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“Any more questions, Becky?”

“I watched. If Gene hadn’t bailed you out, you’d have had a trench full of snow.”

“Yep.”

“Is that all you have to say?”

“Yep. Oh, there probably won’t be any school tomorrow.”

“Why, because of the snow? Do you really think we’ll get that much?”

“I have no idea. Becky tomorrow is Saturday.”

“Goodnight asshole.”

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“When are we going to start manning the Ugly Hut?”

“We can certainly wait until it stops snowing. I walked out and looked at that thing. It would sure be easy to mistake it for a portable deer blind. How much wood do you have left?”

“A couple of cords. Damn, that completely slipped my mind. I guess we’ll have to go get some when it stops snowing.”

“You seem distracted, something on your mind?”

“I don’t know. Becky said that putting in the trench would insure that we got attacked. She pointed out that after we finished the shelter, the Chinese attacked and that my 3 months as a reserve police officer resulted in my being involved in two shootings. I think she’s wrong; still, you never really know do you? I think she’s been talking to Marilyn.”

“What makes you think so?”

“I got the ‘Goodnight asshole’ bit last night. Are we going to try and bake bread today?”

“I doubt we could get it to Reno. I’ll check with everyone and suggest that if they’re out of bread to just bake enough for their family. How was the recliner?”

“Not too bad. I paid for her having a neurotic moment.”

“Talked when you should have listened? They may be a little short on being right at times, buddy, but they’re never wrong.”

“You girls have the day off. Gene says were not baking today because the snow probably has the roads closed.”

“I figured that. Your Mom has bread rising and we’re having cinnamon rolls for desert tonight.”

“Gene asked me how much wood we had. I blew it big time; we’re down to 2 cords. When it stops snowing we’ll be going after firewood. I’m sorry if I spoke out of turn last night.”

“Are you planning on paying Jeb off when the estate is settles?”

“If we can. I mentioned to Lance that the property would probably be appraised at \$2,000 an acre.”

“Oh good, we can pay him off. We have 52 one ounce gold coins and enough silver to get 20 more. At \$1,200 an ounce it would take ~67 Eagles to pay for his half of the farm. You mother said something about going to visit Jeb and Mandy in the spring. You could take her the money and settle up.”

“Are you going to want to travel that far with 3 in diapers?”

“I wasn’t planning on going. I thought maybe you could take your mother to see her new grandchild and settle up with your brother.”

This was all very practical, but it wasn’t even October yet. The snow was beginning to taper off and it appeared that they’d end up getting 5-6”.

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“That SOP has a problem. If we contact the Guard and the Sheriff before we know who is coming, we could end up crying ‘Wolf’. Is there some other way we could handle it?”

“During the daylight we should be able to identify whoever is coming. After dark, anyone who comes is a bad guy. Neither the Sheriff nor the Guard ever comes down that road and there is a curfew. I don’t think the SOP needs changing, but we’ll have to make certain that during daytime hours we do our best to identify whoever it is.”

“Ok. Are we gathering wood tomorrow?”

“We could, the snow has almost stopped. We’ll drag the logs in and you can spend the winter cutting them up. I was thinking about that classroom I was planning on buying. There are two available and I was thinking that I should buy both.”

“What new business are you planning on starting now?”

“None, but it is dirt cheap and we could always use it for storage. They’re 24’x40’ and that would give us 7,700 ft³ of storage. The classrooms deteriorate and can’t be used as classrooms forever. I was thinking that...”

“You two had better turn on the TV. They said something on the radio about trouble in the Middle East.”

Just after dawn, Israeli F-15 bombers bombed most of the Iranian nuclear facilities. Iran responded by launching missiles, which were destroyed in their initial launch stages by Israeli F-16 fighters. The facilities struck by the Israeli bombers included Bushehr, Bonab, Darkhovin, Isfahan, Gorgan, Karaj, Moallem Kaleyah, Tabas, and multiple sites in Tehran. Listeners may recall that in 1981, Israel destroyed the Iraqi reactor, Osiraq, located at the Al Tuwaitha Nuclear Research Center 18 km southeast of Baghdad. Israel is very widely believed to possess a substantial arsenal of nuclear weapons and intermediate-range and intercontinental ballistic missiles to deliver them. Israel has operated three modern German-built Dolphin class submarine since 1999. Various reports indicate that these submarines are equipped with American-made Harpoon missiles modified to carry small nuclear warheads and/or the larger Israeli-made 'Popeye Turbo' cruise missiles, originally developed for air-to-ground strike capability. Officials in Brussels sharply criticized the unprovoked Israeli attack. Iranian sources declined comment.

The well-coordinated attack was obviously carefully planned to avoid a direct nuclear confrontation. Israel maintains more than 100 Jericho 2 & 3 nuclear equipped missiles near Sedot Mikha in the Judean foothills about 23 km east of Jerusalem. The Jericho 1 missile has been retired and replaced with the Jericho 3. The Jericho 2 missile has a payload of 775kg and a range of ~4,000km while Jericho 3 has a similar payload and a range estimated from 4800km to as much as 11,500km.

“That whole area is going to blow up one of these days. I read one place where Israel actually had 100 of the Jericho 1 missiles and over 50 of the Jericho 2s. I can’t imagine why they bombed Iran instead of just launching missiles. If they replaced the 1 with the 3, half of the world is within their reach.

“I think that should be obvious, Gene. Israel once again avoided a nuclear confrontation. With the Israeli Policy of nuclear ambiguity, and the non-use of nuclear weapons, no one has any idea for certain that Israel in fact has nuclear weapons or how many. Their position has always been that they would not be the first to use nuclear weapons in the Middle East.”

“What happened to the Russians? It’s as if they’ve fallen off the planet.”

“Becky brought that up a while back. We’ve never heard any casualty figures from the Russians. It’s almost as if they reverted to their pre-Glasnost policies.”

“If the French and Germans end up going head to head, it would afford the Russians a perfect opportunity to attack Germany. They could push through Belarus and Poland and into the Fulda Gap.”

“What exactly is the Fulda Gap?”

“The Fulda Gap is a section of territory between the former East German border and Frankfurt, Germany. Strategically, the Fulda Gap was of immense importance during the Cold War. It was one of two obvious routes for any invader attacking West Germany. The other is the North German Plain. Frankfurt was at the heart of West German industrial and financial power and its loss would have been a serious blow for West Germany and NATO. Perhaps more importantly, as the nearest crossing point over the Rhine River from Warsaw Pact territory, Frankfurt would offer the invaders an opportunity to cross the formidable Rhine River before NATO was in a position to prevent it. Now that Germany is reunified, it isn't quite as important.”

“NATO is in shambles, Gene. It appears to me that the United Kingdom has aligned itself with Germany. The French seemed bound and determined to get their butts kicked one more time. If they roll into Germany, I wouldn't be surprised if the United Kingdom lends its forces to Germany.”

“German pride would probably prevent that. They've lost 2 major wars in Europe and now they had a minor victory when they responded to the French encroachment. Even though the French have more main battle tanks, that new Leopard III has them out classed. I won't claim that the Germans invented tank warfare, but the Russians and they perfected it in WW II.”

“The Russian T-34s kicked the Germans butts. The last I knew, the latest generation Russian tank was the T-95. Its reportedly has a 152mm smoothbore gun/ATGM launcher with an ammunition load of at least 40 rounds. They also have the T-90s they built in that buildup prior to the Chinese attack. That Leopard III might not fare so well against those two tanks.”

“I suppose it depends on how many of the tanks they have, doesn't it?”

“Why are the two of you talking about another war? Haven't we had enough of war?”

“Yes we have, honey. I guess we just got engrossed in talking about the situation in the Middle East and Europe. Am I still on the couch?”

“Not if you've learned to keep your mouth shut. Gene, do you guys need bread? Glenda baked a batch.”

“So did Marilyn. Are all of you taking a busman's holiday?”

“We just baked 3 loaves and a pan of cinnamon rolls. Jim, go get some wood, the kindling box is empty.”

“Sorry Gene, duty calls.”

“While you’re at it, you’d better bring in wood for the furnace too. You wouldn’t want the kids catching cold, would you?”

The old house had a wood room in the basement. One could close the door and open a window to toss wood into the basement. Jim tossed all of the remaining wood, except for the kindling, through the little door and brought 2 armloads of kindling for the kitchen stove. If properly stacked, the wood room would hold about 12 cords of wood. Because the firewood wasn’t dry, he hadn’t moved it to the basement earlier. With nothing better to do, he took the time to stack the wood in the wood room. In older homes, the room was known as the coal room.

Until the transition from coal to other fuels that began in earnest in the 1950s, nearly every home in New England was heated either with wood or its more convenient alternative, coal. By the early 19th century, most of the country’s coal was mined in Pennsylvania and the Ohio Valley and transported to homes throughout the country. The coal deliveryman then shoveled a home’s delivery of coal into a coal chute. Coal chutes can be found in most homes built before the 1920s. Often they are ground-level metal doors that lead into a small room in the home’s basement – the coal room – located near what was then the furnace. Coal, although dirty and unpleasant by modern standards, was a tremendous step forward when it became widely used in North America. With it, a much higher density of housing could be achieved, the numbers of chimney fires were reduced, and many more forests preserved.

While the coal might produce more heat and was seen by many as a step forward, it wasn’t a renewable resource. John had preferred to just burn wood that was either harvested from the adjoining land or from Ted’s farm. After he had all of the wood stacked, Jim decided that they might as well get enough wood to finish filling the wood room and stack another 10 cords outside. Some of the mobile homes had fireplaces, and they had used up some of the wood. He moved the kindling to the back porch for ready access.

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“All of the wood is in the basement and the kindling is on the back porch. Do you have any more chores before I take off my coat?”

“No. Why don’t you...”

BZZZZZZ...

“Kill the alarm and get the kids to the shelter, honey. We started the watch from the Hut today. I don’t know if this is a test or the real thing, but why take a chance?”

“What’s going on? Is it the real thing or a test?”

“Three cars stopped on I-80 and some people got out. Royce wasn’t sure what to make of it so he tripped the alarm.”

“I’ll get the tractor and hook the chain to the plate but I’ll wait to pull it until we know for sure. How many people were there?”

“Three carloads, about 16-18. We’re warming up the engines on the V-100s, just in case.”

“Did anyone notify the Guard or the Sheriff?”

“Not yet. We’re waiting to see what this is all about first. It doesn’t look like we’ll need to load extra magazines, either.”

“Becky took the kids and Mom to the shelter. Where are Beth and Davie?”

“You should have passed them, they went to the shelter from your basement. Did Becky pull out plasma to thaw?”

“I really doubt it. It runs \$200 for 500ml and once thawed it must be used or discarded. It’s a premium price because it’s type AB plasma and drawn from inoculated persons. If we get into a gunfight, we can radio her and tell her to thaw some. I can’t see anybody in the field.”

“That’s the problem, Jim. Once they got out of their cars, they disappeared.”

“Crap. Maybe we’d better move the V-100s out and look for them.”

“Everyone is here. That’s a good idea. Jake, you and Geena take Abbott. Jack, you and Ramona take Costello. You all know what to do. Lance, why don’t you go along in Abbott and Royce you ride along in Costello?”

To avoid confusion about which vehicle was which, the 2 V-100s had been given names, Abbott and Costello. The vehicles had the names painted on all 4 sides and a caricature of the one or the other of the famous comics on the front.

“I think that we’d better call the Guard. If these people weren’t up to no good, they would have shown themselves by now.”

“I’ll run to my home and make contact,” Gene replied.

“Pull the tarps on the trench. Does everyone have enough ammo?”

A wave of hands acknowledged that, indeed, everyone had ammo. While none of the M16s had M203s, there were the 4 M-79s distributed among the group, as were the extra 2 M-60s. About 15 minutes later, the first elements of the Guard arrived in the form of 2 AH64Ds. They quickly zeroed in on the 16 people using their FLIR and took up a hover. The attack helicopters were equipped with 2 ATAMs (Sidewinders) on each wingtip and 38 FFAR (Zuni) rockets on each wing plus the M230 Automatic Gun. A 5-ton truck arrived a few minutes later and disgorged 2 rifle squads who immediately moved to secure the 16 would-be bad guys. Capt. Ron Matthews and Master Sergeant Owen Smith were in charge of the detail and had followed in a HMMWV.

"I guess we can secure. I'll tell the V-100s to RTB. You'd better get that heavy armament put away before those two guys coming this way get here."

"Screw it, the Sergeant already knows what we have."

"Congratulations, Captain. Recently promoted?"

"Blame it on the Master Sergeant, he came up with 2 of the new M2HBs and made me look good."

"Who were those people?"

"Unknown at the moment," Smith replied. "We'll interrogate them and try to determine that. This trench is new."

"It encircles the housing area. Have there been any more attacks on farms?"

"Another one in California got hit, just down the road from Truckee. They killed everyone."

"Put the V-100s in the barn and secure the other gear. Is this going to be an ongoing occurrence?"

"That's impossible to say. This farm is probably one of the best prepared we've seen. You have several families so you have people to defend the place. Plus you have those armored cars and now the trench. You obviously are set up to contact us if you have a problem. Is the watchtower manned 24/7?"

"It will be from now on, yes."

"Newer vehicles have about twice as much armor as those vehicles of yours. It might be better if you keep them on the inside of the trench. A RPG-7 would wipe one out."

"You're not suggesting that we're going to be up against really heavy weapons are you?"

"I'm afraid that they're out there. But you have the LAW rockets, right?"

"No. The heaviest things we have are the 40mm grenades. We didn't really go scavenging armories or anything. We did get some ammo, but that was it."

"I see. Is anyone here familiar with the LAW rocket?"

"Everyone is a veteran. Army or Marines."

"Well, you seem to have the situation well in hand. Ready to go Sgt. Smith?"

"Sir."

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"I'd better get everyone out of the shelter. Why do you suppose he asked about the LAW rockets?"

"Hard to say, he didn't offer any."

"They wouldn't be the best choice anyway. The range is too limited and we are very unlikely to get something with a foot of armor. I think the best choice would be an M-3. Their range is more like 200 to 1,300 meters depending on the ammo used. But I think they're probably still reserved for Spec Ops teams."

"We aren't going to know until something does or doesn't happen, are we?"

"If you say so, but how are we going to know if something doesn't happen?"

"You've got me, it's all but impossible to disprove a negative statement."

"Gene, you have a phone call, it's Sgt. Smith."

"Knowles."

"Smith. If I could get you some heavy artillery, what would you want?"

"I was just taking to Jim about the M-3 that the Spec Ops people use."

"Good choice, but I'm not sure I can get one. LAWs I can get. Will you take those if I can't get the Gustaf rifle?"

"Sgt., we'll take whatever you can get us. What's the deal?"

"I think the Captain figured out where I got the M2HBs. He told me to see what I could get for you."

“We really appreciate that Sgt. Smith.”

“Tell me something, if you will?”

“What did you want to know?”

“Where did they get the M-60s?”

“I got one from a Marine and 3 from the factory.”

“Yeah, right, from the factory.”

“The factory is in Reno, Sgt. Smith.”

“And the belted ammo?”

“I’d rather not say.”

“Hawthorne. Ok, I’ll be by tomorrow with whatever I can find.”

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The M-72 rockets were packed 5 to the carton and 3 cartons to the crate. Sgt. Smith brought them 3 crates and told them it would probably be all he could get. While he could get replacement ammo for the M-3, he couldn’t actually lay his hands on the rifle. The 40mm grenades could be used for anti-personnel uses and the LAW rockets against vehicles. If the previous day were a true representation of the Guard’s response time, they would be more than enough. The Longbows were quite a surprise. The Nevada Air National Guard had C-130s and the Calvary unit tanks. Smith told them that the Apaches came from the Texas National Guard and had been pulled to Reno when the killings in California occurred.

Smith went on to say that the M-79s they had weren’t really much good beyond 200 meters either. The Marine Corp had tested them for use in Iraq and found that they weren’t as good as the M203. Consequently, for all practical purposes, they could only defend themselves out to 200 meters. If another bunch showed up to attack the farm and had RPG-7s, they were up the creek. If instead, they had the RPG-18 or the newer RPG-22; the farm would be in good shape as both were variations of the American M-72. There was some evidence to indicate that all three were now available, having been brought in through México.

“What is going on our southern border?”

“Not good, Gene. The Governors of Arizona and New Mexico each have 4 counties declared as emergency areas. With the weather, not so many people crossing the border

are dying from heat, but they're killing cattle and some of the drug smugglers are engaging Americans in firefights."

"One wouldn't think people wouldn't be doing drugs with the shape the country is in."

"People will always do drugs. Once they get hooked, especially on the Mexican heroin, they have to have it or die. At least that's what they think. It was bad before the war, but since most of the radiation decayed, it's resuming. Most of the honest Mexican cops are dead. There are still 5 cartels down there and they been fighting each other over access to the border, but it hasn't stopped the drugs from coming in. I'd love to stand around and visit, but I have to get back to Reno. I pulled 7 cases of LAWs for the Guard and I need to get them distributed. We won't be using non-lethal weapons in future MOUT operations."

"Thanks Sgt. Smith, we'll keep our eyes open."

"What do you think, bake bread tomorrow and sell it the day after?"

"They're baking today, Jim so we'll be taking two trucks into town tomorrow."

"I'll check with the Sgt. and see if they know by then who the guys were that they rounded up. It's just possible that they weren't the ones responsible for the killings in California."

"We'll keep someone in the hut and the rest of us will go cut that wood for you. If we have time to cut it up and stack it, where do you want it?"

"Fill my wood room first and stack the rest where the other was stacked. I'll spend some time in the afternoons splitting kindling for the kitchen. If they stack it right, the wood room will hold about 12 cords."

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"You'll have to teach me how to use those rockets he brought."

"Sure Becky, but you won't be able to test fire one. They don't make a practice round and we only have 45. I can show you how to use them when I get back from Reno tomorrow."

"What about the wood?"

"Gene and the others will start on that tomorrow."

"Are you going to take someone with you tomorrow to cover your back?"

"I'll ask Lance to drive the other truck. It would either be that or sitting in the hut all day."

“Who is going to sit in the hut until you get home?”

“Are you volunteering?”

“Not in this lifetime.”

“I guess we’ll have to ask Gene. Royce and Abel can cut the wood.”

“Is that fair?”

“Probably not. All of the wives are baking bread, the kids are in school and until we find out if the people they captured are the ones responsible for what happened in California, I can’t see that we have much choice.”

“Sure we do, Daddy can sit in the hut and Gene can help Abel and Royce. They wouldn’t need to drag the logs back here until the weekend when we have more help. Or Daddy can go with you and cover your back.”

“I’ll visit with Ted and see what he wants to do. What we really need is one of those 155mm howitzers. Unfortunately none of us were in the artillery and I’m not sure they still have the beehive rounds, the M536 (APERS-T). Those suckers have 8,000 8-grain steel flechettes and are a really nasty piece of work out to 300 meters. The closest we could come up with in the 40mm grenades is the M576 buckshot round, if they still make them.”

“You want to stick them with needles when you can blow them up? We aren’t short on the grenades and I know how to shoot those. Forget the artillery. Even if we could figure out how to use it I think that might be overdoing it.”

“I agree. Well, I need to hug the kids and get to bed, are you coming?”

“I’ll be up in a minute; I want to catch the news.”

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They were off at 7:30 the following morning. Ted said he’d handle the hut until they got back from Reno. With them having lain off an extra day, he said they could probably sell out in an hour. They didn’t even get a chance to unload the truck because people were waiting. Ted’s guesstimate was right on the money. When they got back, Lance took over the hut and Ted and Jim headed to the woods, following the tracks in the snow. There were already several trees down and Ted started pulling them with the tractor. And thus it continued until Friday, by which time they had more than enough logs. Abel sawed, Jim split and Royce stacked or tossed the split logs into the coal room. Another week should see Jim and Becky with the wood room full and another 10-12 cords

stacked next to the house. Jim continued stacking the wood from the outside wall towards the door in the evenings.

Moving into her second trimester, Becky didn't have any problems although the risk was higher than before. With the phone service restored, including long distance, Jeb and Jim exchanged emails. Mandy had another boy, and he was named Paul James Young. They'd had trouble in Kansas; bands of roving gangs were hitting farms and stealing anhydrous ammonia, probably to manufacture meth. In many ways, things were almost back to normal, the good and the bad.

"Your Dad and I never thought we see gasoline at a dollar a gallon," Ted told Jim. "In the '50s they had price wars and gas frequently sold for 18¢ a gallon. Just after we got back from 'Nam, it went to 75¢ and has never really gone down. I think maybe I'll look for a used Ford Escape. It's about as close to a pickup as a guy can get in a hybrid vehicle that gets more than 30mpg. Diesel is 40¢ more than gas, when you can find it."

"We aren't short on gas, that's for sure, compared to diesel. Man needs a pickup; it's a shame the hybrid pickups don't get better mileage. Never thought I see the price of diesel \$5.999 a gallon."

"Well, I've got to get home. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Night Ted."

"What did Daddy want?"

"He's talking about buying a used hybrid vehicle."

"Would you like some popcorn? There's a movie on TV I wanted to watch."

"Sure, pop a popper and I'll get caught up the news."

The Egyptian Army began moving all of its 750+ M1A1 Abrams tanks into the Sinai Peninsula in the early morning hours in response to the Israeli attack of Iran. Israel responded by moving to a high state of alert and beginning to position its Merkava series tanks to its border with Egypt. In October 6, 1973, Egyptian forces crossed the Suez Canal and succeeded in destroying all but one Israeli defense position. Initial failure of Israel to launch a preemptive air strike against Syria led to early Israeli difficulties. Reequipped with the American Abrams, the Egyptian ground units are believed to match those of the Israelis, although the Israeli forces exceed the Egyptian by a factor of 2½. While the Israeli Air Forces possess significant numbers of American F-16 fighter aircraft, the Egyptian Air Force also possess significant numbers of the Mirage fighter aircraft as a result of recent purchases.

In addition to the fighter aircraft, Egypt has a significant force of surface to air missiles including the American Hawk missiles. In the 1973 war, Egypt didn't stray far beyond

the Suez for fear of losing its missile coverage. However, there is satellite evidence to suggest that Egypt has moved significant number of its SAMs to its border with Israeli. If this situation escalates into a full military conflict, many of the weapons systems employed by both sides will be American made or licensed.

“What are you watching?”

“The news, honey. I can’t tell if there is going to be a war in Europe or the Middle East first. The Israelis have a history of preemptive strikes if they feel threatened. Egypt moving forces into the Sinai can’t be a good sign. You know that Anwar Sadat led the 1973 war, don’t you? He was killed on the 8th anniversary of that conflict. They didn’t say what was going on in Europe.”

“Here’s your popcorn, mind if I change the channel?”

“Be my guest, what channel?”

“Lifetime.”

“I think I’ll go review the supply inventory on the computer, enjoy.”

“Check on the kids.”

“Sure, I suppose they’re dirty.”

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Despite the appearance that the US was slowly returning to normal, the especially cold winter forced the production of more home-heating oil, cutting the supply of diesel. Because the US had been dependent on so much imported petroleum, the country was well into a Peak Oil crisis. Before the war, when oil was running \$65 a barrel, gas and diesel steadily increased in price. Now, with Venezuela supplying less than half of their former shipments, diesel was \$6 a gallon and no relief was in sight. Oil was pushing \$180 per barrel.

After a week of trips to Reno to sell their wares and no trouble, it was decided that Marilyn would drive one delivery truck and Jim the other. Lance had recovered as much as he was going to and took guard duty. They weren’t grinding as much grain and three of them could manage the baking operation, while the other 3 and sometimes 2, ground grain. About 3 weeks after in incursion, Sgt. Smith came by to talk to them in the late afternoon.

“These weren’t the guys who hit California. I’m afraid that they’re still out there.”

“Don’t you have any good news?”

"It is worse, the guys we picked up aren't guilty of anything more than simple trespass, and we had to let them go."

"I thought they had guns."

"They did, hunting rifles, none of which had been fired."

"Were they hunting?"

"Hunting trouble, yes. But, they didn't attack you and no shots were fired so our hands were tied. They clammed up, got a lawyer and that was the end of it. I'm not saying they'll be back, but you should keep your eyes open. Still manning the tower?"

"Yes, 24/7."

"Good. I'm sorry about not getting you the M-3, but I was lucky to even get the LAWs. You have to know, times aren't normal when I get orders to give civilians anti-tank rockets. You're all vets and know how to use them so it's not like giving dynamite to a school kid. There was a third farm attacked in California, you know."

"Kill everyone?"

"Nope, not everyone in California believes in those stupid gun laws. The rancher was leery and prepared. He reported that about 10-12 guys approached their house, all armed. He had a M1A and his wife a Mini-14; legal guns with illegal high capacity magazines. He claimed that they wounded at least 3 of them. We couldn't verify how many, but there were bloodstains. CHP and the County Sheriff over there are conducting an investigation. I see you have AR-15s and some of those semi-auto FALs."

"Not exactly, but close. One A4 and 5 A3s. The FALs are select fire and we're long on magazines and ammo."

"Get the ammo from Hawthorne?"

"Ammoman in New Jersey, Aussie surplus. The 5.56x45mm is Lake City overruns, M855, SS109."

"You know that in 2005, the Army changed the policy. All of the soldiers in Iraq were allowed to carry the M-9 service pistol. Are you set on handguns?"

"Mite shy on those, Sergeant. Some .45 autos and a whole lot of Single Actions Army's but it sure would nice to have some 9mms. Better guns for the ladies and the teens. We thought we could get some from the Sheriff's armory but when they evacuated Reno, they emptied it out."

"I have orders; I'll see what I can do. Need anything else?"

“Can’t think of anything. We were joking the other night about a 105mm howitzer with some beehive rounds.”

“Sorry, can’t help you. Got to go. Be back in a day or two with whatever I can find.”

“Thanks, Sergeant. What the hell is going on in the Middle East?”

“Nobody has moved. They’re lined up opposing each other on the Israeli border. The one that has me worried is Europe.”

“Why?”

“Satellite photos show the Russian Army had moved to the Belarus border. If the French attack the Germans, it will be a perfect opportunity for the Russians to push through Belarus and Poland and into Germany.”

“What will they call this one, World War IV?”

“I think that they’re going to quit numbering them. You didn’t hear it from me, but there’s some talk around about the US going after some of that Middle Eastern oil.”

“That would solve a problem, but won’t it create a bigger one?”

“They’re going to Iran. With the Ayatollah out because of the Israeli attack, it might be a cake walk.”

“No war is ever a cake walk, Sergeant. We defeated Iraq in 3 weeks and took more than 10 years to get out.”

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Nothing happened for the next week. They were getting ready for Christmas and it wasn’t going to be a lean year. Because of the food operations, money, while not overly plentiful, was available. Nobody seemed inclined to spend that last dollar. The new coins had been issued and they were generally more popular than paper money. The paper money was backed by gold and silver but people were leery. One could hold \$50 in silver dollar coins in one hand, it wasn’t like when the silver dollar was 1”+ across. Gold coins, in the $\frac{1}{10}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and 1-ounce were now in circulation and the $\frac{1}{10}$ -ounce coin had replaced the \$100 dollar bill for big money exchanges.

On December 15th the farm was attacked. Abel was manning the hut and saw the 16 men coming. This time they didn’t park their vehicles on the shoulder of I-80. Sergeant Smith had brought 18 M-9 pistols and 90 magazines and they were kept locked up except when needed. When Abel saw movement, he got his night vision binoculars and checked, then hit the alarm. He also put in a call to the Guard and Sheriff.

“What do you have?”

“I could be wrong, Jim, but I think it’s the guys who were here a while back, same number, 16. The outlines of their weapons don’t look like any hunting rifles, either.”

“Did you call the Guard and the Sheriff?”

“The Guard said 15 minutes and the Sheriff 10.”

“I wish we had more of the night vision equipment. Smith asked if I wanted anything else and it didn’t occur to me. We’ll get the V-100s out and get ready for them.”

“I wouldn’t do that if I were you, I thought I saw the outline of an RPG-7. That’s why I bailed out of the hut. If they take it out, let’s replace it with a Sky Watch with ballistic protection. It has thermal imagining, 6 million candlepower spotlight, and all the things that it takes to be comfortable. Plus, you don’t have to climb a ladder.”

“We’ll worry about that when the time comes. Where are they?”

“100 yards out at 11 o’clock.”

“Royce, put a couple of bursts over their heads with the M-60.”

“Warning shots, or shoot to kill?”

“Give them one chance to retreat.”

Four short bursts rang out and the intruders responded by launching a rocket-propelled grenade into the Ugly Hut. Royce lowered his aim and both Gene and he fired into the general area where the grenade had come from.

“There go the radios, damn it. Can you see them?”

“No, they could be in that draw about 75 yards out. What do you want to do?”

“Let them come to us, we’re better protected.”

“I’ve got movement 50 yards out at 1 o’clock.”

“Gene, Royce, how about some suppressing fire? Here come the Apaches.”

American attack helicopters have a problem; they’re tank killers and lack a .50-caliber or 7.62-caliber machine gun. In a strictly anti-personnel role, the best weapon they have is the Hydra rocket (equipped with a M255A1 Flechette Warhead with M439 RS fuze and

a payload of 1,179 60-grain flechettes. The attack helicopter gunners each fired 2 rockets, resolving the situation permanently.

“Same fellas, Sergeant?”

“Yep. They won’t be bothering anyone again.”

“All dead?”

“The ones that aren’t are going to wish they were. You can collect their weapons and if anything is serviceable, take it. Lost your guardhouse, huh?”

“We may replace it with a Sky Watch Frontier assuming we can find one. Abel said they have an anti-ballistic model with generator, floodlight and thermal imaging. You asked if we still needed anything, is that offer open?”

“What do you need?”

“We lost our radios in the Ugly Hut. A SINCGARS would be nice. We can get more of the Motorola business radios, but I’m not so sure about a ham radio.”

“Gottcha, anything else?”

“Night vision.”

“AN/PVS-7s ok? Want some Aimpoint M68/CCO sights for your rifles? I can get the 3X magnifiers, too.”

“It wasn’t apparent that we needed them until tonight. Yes, please. What the motivation in supplying us with all of the ordnance and equipment?”

“So we don’t need to keep coming here. We’re willing, but turning out at oh-dark thirty isn’t my favorite thing to do. The Captain said to make sure you have whatever you need to defend the place. Give me a list of the mounts that you need for the Aimpoint sights and we’ll get them. By the way, you don’t need to call both the Sheriff and us. He generally refers attack calls to us. And, they’ve started loading armor and other hardware aboard ships down in Texas. It looks like they’re headed to the Middle East, again.”

“Nevada Guard getting involved?”

“We have armor. That’s another reason to make sure you folks are equipped. The Apaches are returning to Texas and they’re going to start loading our tanks on railcars.”

“Sergeant, keep your powder dry.”

"I'll see you in a day or so with the additional equipment. How many sights?"

"Eighteen for the FALs and five for the M16s."

"Gotcha covered."

"Abel, where is Sky Watch located?"

"Marietta, Georgia."

"Damn, that's almost 2,500 miles."

"You don't have to go that far; there is one at Folsom Prison not in use."

"Ballistic model?"

"No. No accessories either."

"Two days, non-stop to Georgia."

"It doesn't matter; we need a new guard tower. We could send Royce and Abel. Figure a day to lie over and that's about 5 days."

"What's the advantage to this new guard tower you want?" Gene asked.

"Raises and lowers, one-man joystick operation. It has a built-in generator, thermal imaging, spotlight, power outlets for 12-volt radios and level III ballistic protection. If we need to move it, one person can handle that in 5 minutes and it's the model the military uses," Abel claimed.

"Do they deliver? This is a long way to go and a lot of fuel for a guard tower."

"Now that the long distance is back up, I guess we could call them and ask."

"Do it, and if they deliver, get the one you want, Abel. Ordered it COD for payment in gold."

"You got it. What the time difference?"

"Three hours."

"They should be open, I'll call. Does it matter to you how much it costs?"

"Not in the least. Tell them we need priority shipment."

That solved the problem with replacing the guard tower. If they got the radio from Smith, picked up a new Motorola in Reno, they'd be set. He hoped that Smith would remember to bring an antenna. This entire thing seemed to be escalating, first a recon and now an attack and these weren't the people doing the killing in California according to the Sergeant.

"Hey boss 3 days. Got the best one they have so it has everything but the radios."

"It's light enough, let's go gather up those weapons."

"On it."

Abel was right, they weren't hunting rifles but as issued G3A3 rifles made by H&K. They were a nice addition and magazines could be had in Reno. Select fire, they had the same basic problem as the M14 rifle, hard to shoot on full auto. H&K had imported about 48,000 of the civilian version, HK91, into the US, but it was anyone's guess where these came from. Probably the same place the FALs had come from. Gene decided to ride to Reno with Jim and get more mags, a replacement Motorola radio and antenna. With everyone up, the ladies started their daily bread routine and grinding grains.

"What's for breakfast?"

"Sausage, eggs and toast."

"Damned short night."

"You were out fighting the bad guys; I was trying to get two crying babies back to sleep. Does that alarm have to be so loud?"

"As hard as I was sleeping, it's good that it was loud. It still took me a few seconds to realize what was going on."

"What happened?"

"They blew up the guard tower with a rocket propelled grenade. Abel is ordering a new one and Gene is going to town with me to get extra mags for the rifles we recovered."

"What happened to the bad guys?"

"Army killed them with anti-personnel rockets, well most of them. We picked up 16 sets of slightly bloody ALICE gear, 16 G3s, 112 magazines, night vision binoculars and some other things. Gene said he'd try and pick up another 96 mags."

"When is this going to end?"

"When it's over."

Jim and Becky – Chapter 9 – WW IV

A world war is a military conflict affecting the majority of the world's countries. World wars usually span multiple continents, and are very bloody and destructive. Under that definition that could have been as few as 3 World Wars, counting the most recent, and as many as 12, Wiki lists them all and leaves it to you to decide. Israel attacking Iran wasn't a war, just a unilateral attack, something that the Israeli were most proficient at. If Egypt invaded Israel, it would probably qualify as a regional war. If the US invaded Iran to get the oil, it would probably be called Gulf War III or Operation Iranian Freedom.

Cheney couldn't start a war without approval of Congress and since the death of President Bush he was having real problems with the Senate. What a shame the Atrocious 7 hadn't stayed in Washington, but they were the first ones to bail. They survived, even though a majority in the Senate was getting tired of their BS. They were regularly getting shouted down by members of their own party. The new President looked at the country's recovery as a business problem and he was getting it all back together, except for the US's Peak Oil crisis. They had already begun drilling off the California coast, but most of the refineries in California had been destroyed. Carson, El Segundo, Paramount, Torrance, Long Beach, South Gate and Wilmington in LA and Richmond, Martinez, San Francisco in the Bay Area. California's refineries are located in the San Francisco Bay area, Los Angeles area and the Central Valley, leaving only the refineries in Bakersfield, Santa Maria and Oxnard to process the crude.

It was going to take time to develop the California and second Alaskan oil fields, time that the country didn't have. And, that was without the surprise that awaited the country. Russia finally broke the silence, announcing War Games to the immediate east of Belarus. The Germans are excellent inventors and excellent students of military history. From WW I, they had learned not to depend on fixed fortifications and from the wars in the Gulf, they understood mobility. In WW II, they only produced 485 of the 69 ton King Tiger tanks (Tiger II). The new Leopard III weighted about 65 tons. With its 1,500hp engine, it was highly mobile and very powerful with the 140mm gun.

In response to the Russian War Games, the United Kingdom and Germany staged their own. The underlying plan was for Germany to protect itself from France and the British to protect Germany's northwestern border. In the US, the final planning stages of the operation to seize Iranian oil were underway. The initial assault would be an airdrop using the 82nd Airborne and followed up with the 101st Airmobile together with a Marine amphibious landing. Their mission was to secure port facilities to permit the unloading of additional heavy equipment.

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“What do you think of it?”

“Damned expensive. We'll have to get the SINCGARS and the business radios mounted immediately and test it out. How much fuel does that tank hold?”

“98 gallons of diesel. It will run the generator for 120 hours or we can run it off of our regular power.”

“This might be a perfect situation to employ Lance’s MP-5N. You talk to him about that Jim. Since we lost the other tower to a RPG, maybe we ought to do something to protect this one. Once it’s lowered, it would be ok if we had it behind a berm.”

“Good idea, we’ll get on it.”

“Jim, CNN just announced that President Cheney is suspending martial law. What does that mean for us?”

“Becky, that means that we can’t call the Army if we get attacked again. Sgt. Smith said something about the choppers returning to Texas and their tanks being loaded on rail-cars for transport to the Gulf.”

“Another war?”

“I’m afraid it looks like that. We need oil and he said that the US was planning on seizing Iranian oil.”

“I thought we had a strategic petroleum reserve.”

“700 million barrels plus, a mix of sweet and sour crude. It was supposed to be 1 billion but one of the locations was unsuitable and abandoned. The law imposes strict withdrawal guidelines. When Bush was President, he increased the reserve from 670+ million barrels to 700+ million barrels even though gas prices were going through the roof. The maximum capacity of the system is about 727 million barrels. I think they did some expansion at Hackberry in Louisiana, but I’m not sure. Even in late 2005 he continued to add oil, apparently aiming for full capacity.”

“I guess it came in handy now, didn’t it?”

“At least the people who used home-heating oil didn’t freeze to death. The reserve was never intended as a short-term solution to rising oil prices. It was intended to replace imports when we couldn’t get as much as we needed, like after WW III.”

◦

“I don’t want to wait until spring,” Glenda announced. “I’m going to get on a train and go to Kansas.”

“That might be better, Mom. I can wire Jeb the money when the estate settles.”

“Pooh, I’ll pay him and you can pay me back. I’ll give him \$80 thousand and if that isn’t right, one of you can repay the other. I was thinking that I might stay for a while, does anyone mind?”

“Only when I have to Mom,” Jim laughed. “Go and see David and Paul. You can come back in the spring to see our new baby.”

o

“Man is that new guard tower something. I doubt anyone can sneak up on this place.”

“Just don’t say it can never happen. Remember the Titanic?”

“I’d never say never; I just said it would be damned difficult. With all of the night imaging gear that Sergeant Smith brought us we’re in good condition no matter what time an attack comes.”

“Any more news on the California attacks?”

“Haven’t heard anything, but Smith was our best source of information. I’m going to miss him and his orders to provide us with whatever we need.”

“Did you check out the G3 rifles?”

“They got some flechettes dings, but otherwise they’re in good working order. We’ve built an impressive arsenal, 18 FALs, 16 G3A3s, 5 M16s, 30 .45 lever action rifles and assorted other weapons. I think we have enough unless someone else attacks us and we get their weapons too.”

“As long as we don’t run out of toilet paper, I’ll be happy. Maybe we ought to sell the G3s.”

“Let’s keep them. A rifle is a personal thing and some people shoot better with one rifle than another. I know the magazines aren’t interchangeable, but we can keep the G3s for home use and only take FALs when we travel. Besides we have a hell of lot more magazines for the FALS.”

“That’s my point; you have a package deal, Gene, and could probably get more for the mags with a rifle than just as magazines. You ought to be able to get enough back to offset some of the cost of that new Sky Watch guard tower.”

“Only if you’re sure, Jim. But I’ll try and pick up more of the FALs so there are some for additional people, should we get some.”

“With Mom in Kansas, the operation doesn’t have any spare people. Becky is working in the grain shop but one of these days, maybe late January or early February, she’ll have to quit. That would only leave 2 in the granary and 3 in the bakery.”

“I have two more mobile homes; they’re on a lot in Carson City. Think we should pick them up and try to get 2 more families?”

“I’m surprised that you didn’t have more guns what with having 7 mobile homes.”

“Figured I could always get some. Frankly, this recovery is a bit of a surprise. I had always anticipated that if we got into a nuclear exchange with someone more of the country would be destroyed and there wouldn’t be any recovering. At least, not like we’ve done. The standard survivalist scenario always has half the population dead and small groups of people banding together to survive against multiple assaults from mutant zombie bikers or whatever they call the bad guys in the story.”

“Were you planning on scavenging and getting weapons from armories?”

“Armories only have M16s and there is no way I take them if I could find anything better. You know how I feel about those popguns. I wouldn’t say they’re sissy guns, but their more for the kids and older ladies. You might as well have an M-1 Carbine as one of those.”

“You looked for FALs before and all you could find was 4.”

“I wasn’t willing to wait. They’re available now but for a bit more than I paid before. Might be able to swap out the G3s and save us some money.”

“Go ahead and get the homes when the snow melts and we can plumb them in and install them. We may be pushing our electrical but since the power’s back on that isn’t really a big deal. Did Smith say whether or not he was going to Iran?”

“Not at the moment, only the Air Guard unit and their Cavalry unit are going.”

“Good, I sure hate to lose him. With martial law cancelled he should be off active duty. Did you ever find out where he lived?”

“No, but if you call the office in Reno, they should be able to get a message to him.”

“I’ll do that when I go to town with the bread. He might be a good candidate to move here.”

◦

“Hi, I’m Jim Young and I’m looking for Master Sergeant Owen Smith.”

“Sergeant Smith is no longer on active duty.”

“I sort of figured that, is there any way I could get a message to him? I own a farm down on I-80 south of Reno. You folks have been out a couple of times when we were under martial law because of intruders.”

“I can forward a message, give me your number.”

“Here’s a slip of paper with the information.”

“Can I tell the Sergeant what this is about?”

“I was going to offer the Sergeant a place to live.”

“I’ll give him the message.”

◦

“Hi, Owen, how are you doing?”

“Fair. I’m back at my regular job at Costco. I got a message that you wanted to see me, what’s up?”

“Sergeant Smith, we’re bringing in 2 more trailers as soon as the snow melts. Gene and I want to offer you a place to live, rent free.”

“What’s the catch?”

“No catch, Sergeant, you’d be obligated to pay for you own utilities, and we’ll provide water and a septic hookup. We run a produce co-op and as you know most of us are vets and used to work for Gene at his grocery wholesale. Gene has 2 more trailers in Carson City he plans to move here. You could work at your regular job and in consideration for living here help in the defense of the farm if there’s more trouble. I assume you’re married, so if you wife wants to work for the co-op, she’d get an equal share.”

“I can talk to Connie, what with schools?”

“Bus picks up our school age children. How many children do you have?”

“Connie and I have two girls, Carla, 17, and Megan, 15. But to be honest with you, I don’t get it.”

“We need someone to work for the coop, Owen. That would be your wife and consequently your family would get the same share as we all do. Your obligation is to provide for the common defense. You’re aware of what we have to accomplish that and we’re

bringing in more of the main battle rifles. I'll admit that our armor isn't much but we do have some crew served weapons."

"So it isn't a free lunch?"

"Never said it was. Just that the housing was free. Plus the co-op did very well last year and we all pocketed a very nice piece of change. Think about it, we sold about 100,000 loaves of bread at \$4.50 each. We also sold what we didn't eat off our 4-acre garden. All of the electricity for our food operation was self-generated using wind and solar power. We had to buy or grow the basic ingredients and process them. 3 women can run the bakery by themselves in a pinch. With Becky well along, she can't do much in the granary and we need help. One other thing, most of your food is free."

"I've always heard that if it sounds too good to be true, it is."

"Gene kept his house in Reno and rents it out. Everyone else sold off everything and moved here. We treat everyone 15 and up as an adult and they are expected to help defend this place."

"The girls too?"

"We're an equal opportunity co-op, everyone 15 and over."

"I'll let you know."

"And we'll go ahead and bring in the 2 trailers."

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"What did he say?"

"He's thinking it over and going to talk to his wife. I'd be skeptical too, it does almost sound too good to be true. They have 2 daughters, 15 and 17."

"I traded the 16 G3s for 12 of the FALs and 250 magazines. The rifles will need a small amount of work to be converted back to select fire. I left them with a friend to make the conversions and they'll be ready in 2 weeks. I'll work the magazines over and make certain they're all good."

"It might be a good time to pull those trailers up from Carson City. As soon as the snow is gone, we can start adding the utility setups."

"We'll take 2 of the delivery trucks and pick them up on Saturday."

"Does the Sergeant live in a home, an apartment or what?"

“I didn’t think to ask.”

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“I talked it over with Connie and the girls. Since we already live in a singlewide, it would just be a matter of disconnecting; moving and hooking it back up. We’d be ahead by the amount we’re paying for lot rent. Connie has been looking for a job but can’t find one. The thing is, she doesn’t know anything about working in a bakery.”

“She can start in the granary and the gals can teach her. There isn’t much to it, we have an industrial mixer, dough kneader and all they have to do is put the bread in the pans, bake it and take it out of the oven.”

“When are you bringing in the trailers?”

“On Saturday. We may scrape off the little bit of snow and try and put in the utilities now. We’ll just put in 3 more spaces instead of 2. Standard question Owen, what do you have for weapons?”

“Two select-fire FALs, 2 AR-15s 2 M1911s, 2 Beretta M-9s, 2 Remington Express shot-guns a 12 and a 20 plus 2 Ruger 10/22s.”

“We’ll provide you with Winchesters and .45 Colt revolvers to wear when you ride the horses. The cowboy hat is optional. Everyone carries both when they ride; it’s one of our SOPs. Listen, if we can get the utilities in by Sunday, you could move anytime you want. In the meantime, let me give you the tour.”

“Big damned shelter, you could put 200 people in there.”

“We don’t stock that much deodorant. No, 9 families would be plenty. But since you have your own trailer, we’ll probably still try and find people to occupy those 2 homes.”

“What kind of people are you looking for?”

“Families with military experience and a willingness to either work for the co-op or with an outside job. We aren’t big on the liberals, and would prefer people who are reasonably self-sufficient. Don’t misunderstand. There is no prejudice involved, it’s just that people have to be willing to work and support and defend the Constitution. If you know some people who meet the criteria, bring them around and we’ll talk to them. However, we would prefer to screen them before you mention how we have everything set up.”

“You didn’t screen me.”

“Yes we did. How many years in the Army and the Guard?”

“Altogether? Close to 20, but that doesn’t make me not a liberal.”

“True, but it makes you a man willing to put it on the line to defend the Constitution. It may not be perfect, but it’s what we have. You understand Duty, Honor and Country even if you aren’t a commissioned officer.”

◦

American forces began their attack on Iran during the early morning hours, Iranian local time. In a multi-phased attack, the 82nd and 101st plus a Marine expeditionary force attacked in the area of Bandar Abbas on the northern side of the Strait of Hormuz. US Naval air forces bombed and destroyed Hawk and Silkworm missile sites on Abu Musa Island, on Qeshm Island and on Sirri Island. Critics in Congress were quick to voice their opposition with Senator Ted Kennedy claiming the attack was all about oil. In response the White House admitted that the Senator finally got something right.

The bombing campaign continues as the US attacks Iranian military units. Compared to other ports along the Persian and the Sea of Oman, modern Abbas is the most equipped port that occupies a strategic position of the greatest importance. Some 1,500-km from Tehran, the US forces face a long campaign through mountainous terrain to seize Iranian oil facilities. CNN has no immediate word on American casualties. The United States is alone in this venture unlike previous military engagements in the Middle East.

In response to the American Invasion, Israeli aircraft launched attacks on the Egyptian tanks across its border. We go to Christiane Amanpour in Muscat, Oman.

Charlie, as you no doubt know, American Forces declined to allow embedded reporters to travel with their troops during the early stages of the invasion. Arab language satellite television networks al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya, both based in Dubai, sharply criticized the invasion stating that the American reasons are obvious and a concerted effort between the Americans and Israelis to continue the process begun by the Israelis when they bombed Iranian nuclear sites. In our interviews with several Omani sources, opinion was divided with a majority indicating that they preferred the Americans to attack Iran rather than their country. Iranian forces have been responsible for blockading the Straits of Hormuz and refusing to permit super tankers to transit the Straits in recent months effectively blocking oil deliveries from Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Iraq.

Saudi Arabia also sharply curtailed sales of oil to the US after the Iranians blockaded the Straits and discontinued them altogether when the Israelis attacked the nuclear sites in Iran. Speculation is that the United States preferred to attack the Iranians instead of the Saudis. With the destruction of the Silkworm anti-ship missiles, tankers are now free to transit the Straits. American minesweepers continue to search the traffic lanes for any sign of Iranian mines with as many as 6 of the Avenger-class Mine Countermeasures ships taking part in the process.

Christiane has there been any word on what the Iranian response has been to the invasion?

Charlie, sources tell us that the resistance is mostly from civilians rather than military, so far. Those military units in the area were quickly overrun and none of the upgrades that the Iranians made to their Russian T-72 tanks including the additional armor against the kinetic and high-explosive anti-tank projectiles have proved to be sufficient to prevent them from being destroyed by American attack helicopters with their Hellfire missiles and 30mm cannons.

You've just heard from Christiane Amanpour in Muscat, Oman. The United Nations, meeting in Brussels was sharply critical of the American invasion and France called for sanctions against the US.

"Who cares what those Frenchmen want? The Germans should have occupied the country," Lance observed.

"They already did, twice, and both times we bailed out the French. If they don't get what they want, I half expect them to line up with the Russians against Germany. We'll have World War IV."

"The only comment I have about that is 'strike three'. The French sure can't help us with our oil problems, now can they?"

"I wonder how the other members of OPEC are going to line up against us."

"Several of those countries are almost totally dependent on their oil revenues for their Gross Domestic Product. The US has consistently maintained a naval presence in the Persian Gulf since 1949. The Saudis will come around or we'll kick their butts next. Personally, I don't see what they have to complain about. When we first discovered the oil we were only paying a nominal price. It wasn't until the Arab oil embargo associated with the Yom Kippur War that the price went through the ceiling."

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The trouble for the United States was only beginning. How much worse could it be than a nuclear war with China? Much worse, the Chinese had only attacked the country with 15 missiles. Admittedly they hit the Capitol and 10 largest cities, but what if they'd hit the Capitol and the 99 other largest cities? The west coast had taken 4 nuclear hits, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego. Oregon and Nevada had escaped any direct damage and other than dealing with fallout, hadn't taken that long to recover. Now the US was practically begging Shia terrorists to attack the country. The US had 12,034km of land boundaries and 19,924 miles of coastline. That included the borders with Canada, north (2,477km) and south (6,415km; total 8,893km), México (3,141km) and Cuba (29km).

Those borders and coastlines were exceptionally porous. A while back, in 2004, there were reports of terrorists having crossed into the US from Mexico. Try as it might, the US government hadn't made any arrests, either. When Bush had finally pulled the country out of Afghanistan and Iraq, Osama bin Laden was still on the loose. He was a Sunni Muslim, pro-Islamic and anti-American. Interestingly enough, Iran, primarily a Sunni nation, reportedly disliked bin Laden even though al Qaeda was based in Iran.

◦

I close my eyes, only for a moment and the moment's gone.

All my dreams pass before my eyes in curiosity.

Dust in the wind.

All they are is dust in the wind.

Same old song.

Just a drop of water in an endless sea.

All we do crumbles to the ground, though we refuse to see.

Dust in the wind.

All we are is dust in the wind.

Don't hang on, nothing lasts forever but the earth and sky.

It slips away and all your money won't another minute buy.

Dust in the wind.

All we are is dust in the wind.

Dust in the wind.

Everything is dust in the wind.

The song by Kansas from the car ad on TV made sense once you saw the words, all of the cars in the ad turned to dust. It meant a lot to some people, people who kids ended up on the Iranian border. Kids who couldn't go to Iraq carry a rifle without a Secret security clearance. I wonder if people needed a Secret security clearance to fight in Vietnam, Korea, World War II or World War I. What was the administration in Washington really planning back in 2005? Why were Generals saying the war would last 4 more years? It was all just dust in the wind, especially now that the US was in a new war in the Middle East.

◦

French forces today crossed the German border for a second time. Meanwhile Russian tanks crossed Belarus and entered eastern Poland. The United Kingdom immediately responded by calling up all reserve units and moving available forces to Berlin. General Wesley Clark, the former Commander of NATO is in our studio. General Clark, what do you make of the situation in Europe?

Obviously France and Russia are moving in concert. Both nations, together with Germany, opposed the Bush administration's operation in Iraq. Regardless of the real motivations behind the War in Iraq, the two nations are taking advantage of the US involve-

ment in Iran to attack Germany. While the British Challenger II and German Leopard III are superior to both the Leclerc and the Russian T-95s and T-90s, the Russians have had ample opportunities to develop their tank tactics that they used against the Germans so successfully during the Second World War. At the moment this should prove to be more of a battle between helicopter tank killers than tanks. Historically plans to defend Europe always included a multinational NATO force including the United States, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. If the Poles are successful in delaying the Russians, Britain may have a chance to move enough forces to Germany to delay, but not stop the Russian advance. Frankly, the only hope I see is if Germany can quickly defeat French forces and move to reinforce the British forces.

“After what Russia has been through from the Chinese, I can’t imagine that this will involve nukes.”

“I hate saying it, but it could. France has 350 nuclear weapons.”

But the British...”

“Have only 160. Leaving Russia as the only other country involved in Europe with nuclear weapons.”

“Hmm...”

“Exactly.”

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Whether Iran liked or disliked it supported it or not, it was the home base of al Qaeda. In 1998, bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri co-signed a fatwa, declaring, “The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies – civilians and military – is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque (in Jerusalem) and the holy mosque (in Makka) from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the words of Almighty Allah, ‘and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together,’ and ‘fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah.’”

Al Qaeda had declared an open-ended war against the US. Their plans for the next attack had been long in the making, beginning in 2002 and continuing to the present day. They had smuggled three types of weapons into the US through México, nuclear, biological and chemical. Their plans had been slightly disrupted when the people from Lodi had been deported but it was more of an inconvenience. The Chinese attack had set their plans back more than a year when they lost key cells members in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Fortunately, for them, they hadn’t lost their weapons. After they brought Israel’s principal ally, the US, to its knees, they would organize the Palestinians into a cohesive organization and work on the Israelis.

Al Qaeda people were already in place in both countries and the leadership was in Pakistan. They advanced their timetable when the US attacked Iran. They picked March 1st as the day to make their multi-pronged attacks. Volunteers would infect their families and travel on trains spreading the biological component. Water supplies would be compromised and their Russian built compact nuclear weapons detonated in Atlanta. They couldn't guarantee they'd get the Executive branch, but they should be able to take out Congress and the Supreme Court. That would at least weaken the Executive branch, when the new Vice-President, Colin Powell, was killed. A plan never survives the first contact with the enemy.

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"I managed to get the propane topped off today and all of our tanks refilled except the diesel. We had to add PRI-G to the gas; it's some old stuff from a tank at a service station in California. The tank in the shelter is full and we have an additional 4,000-gallons of diesel. It was the best that I could do."

"Gene, we sold out of ground grain today in Reno, people seem to be stockpiling. If we can get enough ground, I'm sure we can sell 2 truckloads tomorrow. That would mean having a group stay up all night grinding grain."

"I can take the first shift with Royce and Abel. Can you get Lance and one other person to pull a second shift?" I'll line up two shifts of kids to bag it and weigh it."

"Is this what we really want to do?"

"Yes. If people are concerned, it probably means that they sense something to be concerned about. Tomorrow is Friday so we wouldn't be back to market until Monday. We'll grind all we can over the weekend and take two truckloads each on Monday and Tuesday."

While the most obvious means to bring down the utility grids was to destroy a portion of the grid and cause a cascade failure, the same thing could happen if enough people were out with the 'flu'. You could also bog down the transportation system when enough of the train crews got the 'flu'. Modern water systems generally prevented the introduction of chemicals into a water system but it wasn't foolproof. Wartime security in the temporary capital, Atlanta, would be extensive but it wouldn't be foolproof either. Few knew the complete plan and none in America. It was set into motion on Valentine's Day, Jimmy and Becky's first birthday.

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"I think that first birthdays are more for the parents than kids."

"I agree. They both look like they're ready for bed."

“All they’re doing is playing with their pieces of cake. They did eat a little ice cream, but I’m going to check their diapers and put them down with a bottle.”

“Need some help?”

“You take the Fountain of Youth and I’ll do our daughter.”

“When are you due?”

“Five or six weeks. I think we should stop at 3; my back is never going to recover. Do you want to put on the news?”

“Nah, they’re only halfway to Tehran and a few clicks one way or the other won’t make much difference. That war in Europe is too depressing to watch. I’m really tired, between Friday, Monday and Tuesday we sold 6 truckloads of ground grain. We tried to find out why people were stockpiling, but the general sentiment was that they, ‘just had a feeling’ something big was going to go down.”

“What are they calling this one?”

“It depends on who you listen to. From the point of view of people in the Middle East, it’s the Fourth Gulf war, the first being the war between Iraq and Iran, the second and third being what we call Gulf War 1 and 2 and the fourth being Operation Iranian Freedom.”

“I didn’t know that the Iranians wanted to be freed.”

“It probably refers to freeing their oil so we can get it. They can’t help but lose, no country can stand up against the US, except possibly for Russia and that would be debatable.”

“I’ve had enough war to last me a lifetime, Jim.”

“You and me both, but I think there can only be a few more. The last one will be fought on the Plain of Har-Megiddo.”

“Armageddon?”

“That’s the place; it was the old cross roads of the Middle East a few thousand years ago. The city of Megiddo was a fortified city on a hill that controlled the two principal roads for the Middle East. It was said that whoever controlled Megiddo controlled the world. Thirty-four major battles have been fought on that Plain.”

“It’s interesting, honey. What John was describing in the Book of Revelations was the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. However, that doesn’t mean that it’s not just a relevant today as it was 2 thousand years ago. Some guy once said that those who for-

get their history are condemned to repeat it. You can always define a conflict in terms of good and evil, it just depends on a person's viewpoint. John was totally right you know, the Roman Empire fell and Constantine implemented Christianity as the official religion of the remaining Empire. There are something like 2,000 Christian religions in the US, each with a different viewpoint. Regardless of how they all define what will happen and interpret the Bible, it will boil down to a final conflict between good and evil. According to the Bible, good will win."

"What is your favorite verse in the Bible?"

"John 3-16."

"Yeah, huh, that says it all doesn't it?"

"The Bible is just a history book that recounts the history of mankind's relationship with God. It is as relevant today as it was when it was written. It's still our guidebook and it doesn't matter what any of those TV Evangelists say, it says what it says, regardless of peoples' interpretations."

"Who is going to fight the final battle?"

"Probably the Christians and the Muslims."

"It does seem to be headed that way, doesn't it? Rub my back?"

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"CDC."

"What hospital, again?"

"And what is the nature of the disease? Hold, I'll transfer your call."

"Doctor, I have a Denver hospital on the line. They have a major outbreak of what they're saying is a virus. They're on line 3."

"Doctor Roberts? I see, how many fatalities? No, continue the quarantine and we'll fly in a Response Team on a Gulfstream."

Disease surveillance and outbreak investigation are the highest bioterrorism priorities, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These are related but distinct activities. Disease surveillance is a continuous activity that involves routine reporting of potential threats, such as single cases of communicable diseases. Through the timely accumulation of data, surveillance permits the early identification of outbreaks that require epidemiological investigation. Epidemiologists will interview persons suffer-

ing from the disease in question and their contacts with the goal of determining the source of the disease and its means of transmission.

Unfortunately, local public agencies lack the capacity for real-time surveillance and immediate response to outbreaks caused by terrorists. Our system of reporting diseases that might warn us of emerging epidemics is antiquated and ineffective. Many clinicians do not bother to report diseases even when they are legally obligated to do so. Clinicians are busy and, besides, patient privacy is an issue. Having a public health investigator show up at your patient's door to ask about sexual partners is an example of what can happen when diseases are reported. And, of course, this kind of investigation is indeed necessary. If a quickly spreading disease outbreak is triggered by terrorists, public health officials must be able to track down the source if they are to stop the epidemic. Treating victims after the disease has become a disaster is like locking the barn after the horse is gone. In actual fact, epidemics are not stopped by treating the sick, but by preventing exposure.

The best system would involve reporting all cases of infectious disease, even if we do not immediately suspect that bioterrorism is involved. After all, if you are not expecting to see anthrax, you might call it flu. But if there is a sudden outbreak of flu, public health officials might begin to put two and two together right away.

Unfortunately, our system of collecting and analyzing new cases of infectious disease is very slow and cumbersome. Even if all cases were reported, local health officials may not receive the information soon enough to permit mapping and charting and other analytical activities that will reveal the level of danger we might be facing. This is the computer age, but local health agencies are not equipped with the latest machines or software for this purpose. They also lack the staff – trained epidemiologists – to investigate the outbreaks. Epidemiologists are “disease detectives” who lead a team into the field to search out causes and stop the epidemic before it gets out of control. A nasty epidemic is likely to result in a report being made to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, which will then send a team to investigate. This system has worked well enough in the past, but imagine what the result will be if a dozen outbreaks occur at once and are scattered across the country.

We would not send out to Atlanta for a pizza, because it would take too long. And we sure don't want to send out to Atlanta when people are getting sick all around us. We want to be able to handle epidemics with regional health departments.

Additional epidemiologists must be trained and placed in regional health agencies. New systems for capturing cases and relevant information about those cases must be developed and tested. These systems must be very easy to use, so that busy clinicians won't be burdened. Instantaneous transmission of clinical information to the regional public health agency must occur. Privacy may suffer, but how important, really, is secrecy about our health problems if that secrecy causes an epidemic to get out of control? The terrorists would be delighted if our concern about privacy crippled our public health defenses. – James E. Rohrer, Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Department of Health Services,

Research and Management, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Lubbock, Texas.

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...but imagine what the result will be if a dozen outbreaks occur at once and are scattered across the country. The train system was especially slow as the country rebuilt the rail system for passenger trains. This permitted the disease more time to infect additional passengers. Although the infected people didn't realize that they had been intentionally infected, they understood their instructions to pass through all of the cars on the trains repeatedly, perfectly. The women and children obeyed their husbands and fathers. Such was the will of Allah.

Meanwhile, bio-organisms were introduced into water supplies at strategic locations around the US. This was the so-called chemical option although it was in fact more of the same virus, engineered to live in a public water supply for several days. Modern water systems use various means to remove chemicals from water supplies, thus a pure chemical option wasn't viable. The third option of the so-call NBC program involved detonating several small nukes in multiple Atlanta locations. Again, this would happen on March 1st.

"There seems to be a flu outbreak in Reno. I'm afraid of picking up something and transmitting it to people back here. We're going to have to shut down the baking operation for the moment."

"But, they've already done their baking for today. We can't waste 400 loaves of bread."

"I'll make tomorrow our last trip. I've been wearing an N-100 filter mask. Advise everyone that Reno is off limits until further notice."

"Some of the folks aren't going to like that, they work in Reno."

"It can't be helped, Gene. I'll let Owen know and he can pass it on."

"Owen, I'm quarantining the farm. Tomorrow will be our last delivery to Reno for the foreseeable future."

"I just got a call from the store manager; Costco is shutting down for a few days because of this flu outbreak. Some kind of government ordered closure. I was just getting my uniforms out; I expect that they'll have to activate the Guard to enforce the edict."

"But you have a MOPP suit, right?"

"Right and they're NBC rated for up to 2 weeks. We call the MOPP suit the Battledress Over garment. Worn in conjunction with a M40A1 Mask with the protective hood, we sort of look like Imperial Storm troopers."

“But you haven’t been activated yet?”

“Nope. Captain Matthews called and said to get ready, just in case.”

“We already had the bread baked and we can’t waste it so we’re taking it to Reno tomorrow. I’ll wear the mask and decontaminate when I get back. After that, with the exception of active duty personnel such as yourself, the farm will be locked down.”

“Do you have time to do more bread tonight?”

“Yes, why?”

“Might be a good idea to bake a second 400 loaves and tell everyone you won’t be back for a while. I’m sure that any you don’t sell can be sold to the Guard. From the sounds of the Captain, it isn’t if, but when we get activated.”

“I’ll talk to Gene and Marilyn.”

“Fine, we’ll do it. Marilyn, can you get things started and we’ll grind the wheat?”

“Ok, 384 more loaves coming up. It will be ready by morning.”

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“Jim, National Command Authority just declared martial law and a full quarantine. I discussed the bread deal with the Captain and he said to drop it off at Guard headquarters and we’d get it distributed. I can bring the receipts back when I make it back to the farm.”

“You’ll need someone to drive the second truck, Owen.”

“The Captain is sending a Corporal. You’ll recognize him without any problem. We’re supposed to be at level 4.”

“Any word on what’s going on?”

“Some sort of virus. They’ve tracked it to the passenger trains but not to a specific source.”

“Jim, you’d better come, Becky is going into labor.”

“What next?”

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“You’re not due yet, what’s going on?”

“I guess junior is just in a hurry to get born.”

“He or she is about 5 weeks early, will that be a problem?”

“It shouldn’t, but if you can move me to the shelter, we’ll have all of the equipment ready if it is. Get my Mom and Marilyn to help with the delivery.”

“Marilyn is baking bread. I’ll get Janet and see if she can help.”

“I can’t really help, Jim, but Connie has some experience with birthing.”

“I’m moving Becky to the shelter because that’s where all of the medical equipment is. Could you get Sally and Connie to meet me in the shelter?”

“Janet is getting your Mom and Connie. There is a gurney in the tunnel connecting to the shelter.”

“Just as soon as this contraction ends.”

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“I’m here for Master Sergeant Smith. The Captain told me that we were supposed to drive two trucks to Reno.”

“Hang on Corporal and I’ll get the Owen.”

“Corporal, you drive that truck and I’ll drive the other. Lance, I have no idea when I’ll be back. You can always reach me with the SINCGARS.”

“You be careful Owen. Do we have an official call sign here?”

“We’ll use Young Ranch and frequency 2010. You monitor it from now on.”

“Roger, Young Ranch on frequency 2010.”

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“It’s a boy, have you picked a name out?”

“John Theodore Young.”

“Your Daddy will like that. I’ll tell Jim he has a new son.”

“Where is he?”

“In the radio room monitoring the radio and watching TV.”

“Will you get him for me?”

“Thank you Becky, he’s a fine looking boy for a little red prune. Are you sure about the name?”

“Yes, and if it was a girl I’d decided on Glenda Sally Young.”

“I’ll get on the phone and notify my mother and Jeb.”

“When is she coming home?”

“No time soon, the President has implemented martial law again with a total travel embargo. It was on CNN. He has called for Congress to meet at 9am to discuss the implications of the viral outbreak.”

“What is the date today?”

“March 1st.”

“Do you know how much he weighed?”

“Five pounds, 6 ounces according to your mother.”

“Jim, you’d better get back to the radio room. CNN just went off the air in the middle of a sentence. Congratulations, you two.”

“Thanks, Lance. I’ll be right there. You might let Gene know.”

“I already did. He put Royce up in the Sky Watch. If Owen can handle it, it might be a good idea to get a second SINCGARS for the radio shack.”

“Advise Royce to ask for one if he hears from him. I imagine they’ll let us know what’s happening in Atlanta as soon as they know.”

“Young Ranch, this is Sgt. Smith standing by.”

“Roger Sergeant, this is Royce. Jim asked me to request a second SINCGARS if you called. Do you have a status on Atlanta?”

“Roger. The new National Command Authority is President Colin Powell and Acting SECDEF Gordon England operating out of Minneapolis. Atlanta was nuked. Alternative TV will resume shortly from Minneapolis. Be advised that there are multiple terrorist attacks occurring, primarily biological. This virus is a killer.”

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This is KARE-11 TV in Minneapolis, standby for an announcement from the new President of the United States, Colin Powell.

My Fellow Americans,

At one minute after 9am this morning multiple nuclear devices were detonated in Atlanta, Georgia. President Cheney was killed as were all members of Congress present in Atlanta and all nine justices of the Supreme Court. At this time we are unable to enter Atlanta to care for the injured.

Very little of your government is intact at the moment.

I have been following developments around the country and there appears to be an attack in progress against this country that has several components. The first of these is an engineered virus that was spread by our passenger train system. Moments ago, officials from CDC in Denver announced that the illness was apparently spread by Arab-Americans traveling by train.

There appears to be a second source for this same virus in the form of contamination to our water supply. However, at the moment, we have few details. Everyone is advised to boil all water for 5 minutes before using. President Cheney invoked martial law at 6am Eastern Time this morning. This includes a full embargo against all travel until more information is available on this virus.

I have ordered our troops withdrawn from Iran and indications are that will be completed within 45 days. This administration will take such steps as are necessary to insure those responsible for these attacks receive appropriate punishment. The United States will abandon attempts to cover our oil shortage with Middle Eastern oil. Other alternatives are available.

Alma and I ask all members of this great nation to join us in praying for the victims of these attacks.

“For every action, there is an equal, but opposite reaction. I wonder what that will be.”

Jim and Becky – Chapter 10 – The New Rules

“What’s wrong, Jim?”

“Someone nuked Atlanta and wiped out most of the government. We’re under martial law again with a total embargo on travel. The country has been attacked and there’s some engineered virus running around killing people.”

“Oh, I thought it was something serious. Viruses require people to spread them. If they placed an embargo on travel, it will eliminate the human contact.”

“Right, except that whoever did it added it to the water supply.”

“If you boil the water, it will kill all organisms.”

“That’s what President Powell said.”

“Colin Powell is President? What happened to Cheney?”

“He was visiting with Congressional leaders when the bombs in Atlanta went off.”

“Look at the bright side; we got rid of Teddy and Hillary. Where is the Capitol now?”

“Minneapolis.”

“You’re right; it is the end of the world as we know it.”

“What makes you say that?”

“Billy Graham is headquartered in Minneapolis.”

“Yes, but he doesn’t live there. We’re actually in better condition than when the Chinese bombed us.”

“In what way?”

“Powell is pulling the troops out of Iran. He said we didn’t need their oil. We get to start over with Congress and just maybe we’ll get some real honest Americans instead of political hacks.”

“Welcome to your new world, John Theodore Young. What did our new baby get born into?”

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“Young Ranch, this is Owen, we’re 5 minutes out with the trucks.”

“Roger, Owen, this is Lance, come on in.”

“Hey Owen, what’s happening?”

“Man, what a mess. The virus isn’t as bad as it could be; it’s a mutated form of avian virus, H5N1. They had something resembling a vaccine for this particular sub-strain back in 2005, and it seems to be working because the engineered virus isn’t mutating. Powell contacted the Governors of the states and instructed them to appoint 2 independent Senators and an independent Representative from each Congressional District. They’ll be moving the government to an undisclosed location. The word is that Powell will retaliate against Iran after our troops have retreated.”

“Why Iran?”

“The attack was made by al Qaeda and they’re headquartered in Iran. They’re already contemplating attacks against the French and Russian forces engaging the Germans and British. The word is it will be with conventional forces. The attack on Iran will definitely be nuclear, those neutron bombs. It could even occur before our troops are out; neutron bombs are line of sight weapons with a limited radius. They only have an effective area of about one square mile. These would be the perfect weapons to use, especially against what they were originally intended for, armor.”

“We attacked Iran over oil, how will this change that?”

“If you were the leader of Saudi Arabia and the most powerful nation in the world totally decapitated one of your allies, what would you do? Scuttlebutt suggests that everyone with oil supplies will negotiate to avoid the same thing happening to them. The only real problem with the neutron bombs is that they have a shelf life of between 12 and 13 years. I got a quick education during the past few days on what we’re planning and how those bombs work.”

“Are we helping the Germans and British?”

“Every Warthog, Apache and Cobra we have is being transferred to Europe. They’re forming up what amounts to American Squadrons under direct German and British control. We didn’t have that much armor on the ground in Iran; we didn’t really need it with the A-10s and the AH-64s. They really fight wars differently these days. I have enough time in I’m going to retire when this mess is cleaned up.”

“One trip to Iraq was enough for me.”

“I brought you a SINCGARS radio for the radio shack and an antenna. You had better mount it on Gene’s tower; it’s just a vehicle antenna. What new here?”

“John Theodore Young, 5 pounds 6 ounces.”

“Hey, congratulations. Becky ok?”

“She’s getting along well under the circumstances. We took her to the shelter to have the baby because we weren’t sure what was going down. I talked to my Mother and brother in Kansas; they haven’t had any problems there.”

“I’ve got to go see Connie.”

“She’s in the shelter; she helped Becky with the delivery.”

“You didn’t?”

“I was in the radio room watching TV and listening to the radio when she gave birth. Then, I was checking on her when Atlanta blew up.”

“For the moment, maintain a high level of security. You DO NOT WANT any infected people getting to the ranch.”

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Even as American troops were still being transported from the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas, a flight of 4 B-2 Spirit bombers made a synchronized attack on several Iranian cities. The loss of life was higher than Powell wanted, but it succeeded in decapitating the Iranian government. Those 4 B-2s joined the 4 already stationed in England, giving the Americans a compliment of 8 bombers, all capable of delivering 16 ER weapons apiece. The aircraft were serviced and the bombs loaded.

Saudi Arabia was made aware of the nuclear attack on Iran and advised that should they allow further adventures on American soil they would get some of the same... They were also told that the US was willing to pay a flat rate of \$45 dollars per barrel for oil but the other nations of the Persian Gulf had first right of refusal. A blockade of the Persian Gulf ports was to be implemented and sales to France and Russia were totally forbidden. Six B-2 Spirit bombers were being based at Diego Garcia to enforce President Powell’s ‘suggestions’.

Powell flew to Moscow to visit with Putin. None of the details of their discussions were released, but Russia immediately stood down their forces and began withdrawing to Belarus. On the return flight Air force One stopped in Paris. After several hours of discussions, Powell left to return to the US. While Air Force One was still in the air, 8 B-2s made overflights of France, but didn’t drop any weapons. Gordon England was out of touch and American nuclear policy requires the President and the SECDEF, as National Command Authority, to authorize the release of nuclear weapons. The B-2s were escorted by 64 F-22 Raptors. Upon his return to the US, Powell ordered the B-1B bombers restored to nuclear capacity. Further modifications, classified Top Secret, were also ordered. He was told all would be completed in 90 days or less.

Differences between the B-1B and its predecessor, the B-1A of the 1970s, are subtle, yet significant. Externally only a simplified engine inlet, modified over-wing fairing and relocated pitot tubes are noticeable. Other less-evident changes include a window for the offensive and defensive systems officers' station and engine housing modifications that reduces radar exposure. The B-1B was structurally redesigned to increase its gross takeoff weight from 395,000 to 477,000 pounds (177,750 to 214,650 kilograms). Still, the empty weight of the B-1B is but 3 percent greater than that of the B-1A. This added takeoff weight capacity, in addition to a movable bulkhead between the forward and intermediate weapons bay, allows the B-1B to carry a wide variety of nuclear and conventional munitions. The most significant changes, however, are in the avionics, with low-radar cross-section, automatic terrain-following high-speed penetration, and precise weapons delivery.

The AGM-131 was approximately has $\frac{2}{3}$ of the size of the AGM-69. In this way a B-1B could carry up to 36 of the newer missile, against 24 of the older AGM-69. The wing sweep was also increased, allowing higher speeds approaching Mach 2 at ground level, the speed of the B-1A. If you compare the engines in the B-1A and the B-1B, they are both based on the same model engine (101) and are capable of exactly the same amount of thrust. The limiting factor in the speed was the wing sweep. George H.W. Bush cancelled the AGM-131 program which included cancelling the W89 warhead. They were later revived under an 'ultra' classification level.

The B-1Bs were retrofitted with the variable engine cowlings and the sweep restored to the original 67.5°. The engines of the B-1B actually had slightly more thrust than those of the original. The travel embargo remained in effect for 60 days, long enough to identify contaminated water supplies and clean them. The virus died out and people were vaccinated with the new H5N1 vaccine being produced. Germany sweep into France and this time occupied the county, aided by Britain. And finally, it should be noted that light sweet crude oil began arriving in the country.

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Colin Powell was first, last and always a soldier. Being a diplomat came later when George Bush was elected President. That he didn't relish the role had always been an open secret. Powell was an excellent diplomat but he was an honest man, ill-suited to politics. Now that he found himself with only the American people to account to, he did things the way he'd always preferred. One clearly explained the available options in a given situation to the other guy. Then told him or her, what would happen if we were required to use force. Considering the number of weapons used on Iran, the damage to the infrastructure was minimal.

A new Capitol would be built in the Geographic Center of the continental US. Location: From Lebanon, Kansas, take US Hwy 281 North 1 mile to Hwy K-191, take K-191 West 1 mile to the marker. Lebanon was almost straight east of Denver and midway across Kansas. It was only a few miles south of the Nebraska border. Already, temporary build-

ings were being erected and an airport being constructed. It was also in the heart of the Bible belt. The estimated construction time for the new Capitol was 4 years. The Army Corp of Engineers and the Navy's Construction Battalions would build it. The memorials in Washington DC would remain where they were and be repaired as necessary. Missing monuments, never built because Congress disapproved, would be constructed in the old Capitol. Powell was determined that the United States of America would honor all of it war dead. The new Capitol would be called New Washington.

The Governors listened to the President's instructions, ignored them and then appointed the people they wanted. Most were local politicians but neither of the major parties was overly represented. Congress now included members of the Libertarians, the Greens, the American Independents and the Reform Party. No party had a clear majority – what a refreshing change.

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“NCA announced that the travel embargo and quarantines would be lifted in 30 days.”

“Are they still in Minneapolis?”

“Moved to some place I never heard of in Kansas and are building a new Capitol. Oil is flowing again and as refineries come on line the price of fuel will continue to fall. It should get down to just under \$2 a gallon. They're projecting 3 years to reach those prices. However, Congress imposed a 100% tax on all new vehicles that don't get greater than 30mpg city and 35mpg highway. They're also allowing major incentives for vehicles that exceed 50mpg.”

“How much longer will you be on active duty?”

“About 60 days, Jim. Once the martial law ends and goods are flowing, they told us we'd be released. How is that new baby of yours doing?”

“He's up to almost 7 pounds. With the twins walking, there's never a dull moment. Mom said that she couldn't wait to get home. They didn't get any of that virus in that area, too isolated. Any other news?”

“Powell is merging all intelligence agencies and the FBI into the DHS. He reportedly said that it's about time they all had the same agenda. The real federal police will now be the US Marshals Service.”

“We got to start planting the garden, its 5 acres this year.”

“You still looking for a couple of families?”

“We have 2 empty trailers. Have someone in mind?”

“One is a retiring Marine Gunnery Sergeant. Married, 3 kids, all grown. The other is a fella in my outfit. He’s an E-5, married with no children, but with one on the way. The young fella talked to my boss at Costco and when he’s released from active duty, he has a job. If you’re interested, I’ll talk to them and they can come to see you once the travel restrictions are lifted.”

A month later the couples were interviewed and offered a place to live. And 5 weeks later, Glenda finally arrived home. Gene took the third classroom and moved the grain operation to it. He added 4 additional stoves and 24 used Presto canners. As soon as the travel restrictions had been lifted, they were at the farmer’s market with bread and ground and rolled grains. They also put up a sign for used quart and pint mason jars, offering to buy back the ones they’d previous sold filled. The pasta product line, produced in the granary, was expanded with more space to work in.

Retired Gunnery Sergeant Michael Cole, Mike or Gunny, and Jolene; grown children Michael, Stacy and Erika. Gunny had a few souvenirs from his many years in the Corps. His real prize was a case of what had been at one time factory new M14 rifles that had been slated for destruction in the 1960s. He bought the case of rifles from another Gunny who was retiring and needed money. The rifles were as issued and Gunny had not only a whole lot of magazines but even the bayonets. Although Gunny never used the setting, the rifles were capable of full auto. In addition, Gunny had the usual assortment of firearms that a hunter would have, shotgun, .22 rifle, etc. His favorite handgun was the M1911. Mike and Jolene were assigned to trailer number 6.

Jacob ‘Jake’ Emory and Linda, who was 4 months pregnant with their first child. Jake was highest in his class at NCO Academy. He and Linda were in their late 20s. They could contribute a pair of AR15s and a pair of H&K USP Tactical pistols. Jake and Linda got trailer 7.

“Mom did you pay Jeb?”

“\$80 thousand in gold, just like I said. I have your papers in my purse.”

“Here is your money back. If the estate settled, I haven’t heard.”

“There’s no rush to get my money back, Jim.”

“I hate loose ends, Mom. We still have more than enough. What do you think of your new grandson?”

“He’s the spitting image of you when you were that age. He’s a keeper.”

“I wouldn’t hold my breath waiting on that lawyer of yours,” Gene announced. “I heard he died of the virus. His partner is swamped trying to handle his own business and his.”

"I'm sorry Mrs. Young but we were swamped and nothing was done on your husband's estate. As I understand it, everything has already been divided, is that right?"

"That's correct. The boys worked out a division of the farm and I have everything else."

"I'll generate a new deed to the farm and get that filed. It could be many months before we can do anything else; there were so many deaths in the past 4 years. Here is your checking account book back. I don't believe there will be any estate taxes at all. You've established the value of the land at \$2,000 an acre and that's \$160 thousand. Everything else was jointly owned if I understand. So, I'll file the deed and send you the final papers next year. You can see my clerk to find out how much the filing fees are and I'll settle for one hour, \$150. I'm sorry, but that's all I can do for now."

"Thank you."

"Probably has several big estates to settle, Jim. I'll pay the fees and we get out of here before he changes his mind. As far as I'm concerned, the estate is settled, agreed?"

"Yes."

o

"The farm is ours Becky, free and clear."

"That's it? That calls for a celebration. I'll ask your Mom to watch the kids and we'll go into Reno for dinner."

"Want to catch a show?"

"I'll give you a show when we get home."

o

"What do you think, Gunny? Defendable?"

"Looks to be, had any trouble?"

"Just once. We called in the Guard and they took out the guys with 2 Apaches."

"Won't help you now, the Guard is off active status again. Don't reckon we'll have much trouble, though, the country is pretty well settling down. Owen said that Costco was getting trucks in again so food is becoming more available. If you ask me, and you didn't, that trouble with the Middle East is far from over. Until they can get bin Laden, we're going to have continuing terrorist events. With us buying Saudi oil again, they'll have money to funnel to him."

“Come on Gunny, the man used up his weapons when they attacked Atlanta. Powell said on TV that they were closing both borders.”

“They couldn’t seal the Méxican border if they used a division of Marines. Damned thing is over 3,000km.”

“It’s 3,141km, 1,952 miles. Do you think that’s where the next trouble will come from?”

“Don’t know and couldn’t even guess, Jim. If Powell does seal the Méxican border, it’s going to cause a crisis in Mexico. They get all kinds of people from Central and South America trying to sneak into the US the back way. Their oil production is way off and they can’t grow enough food to support their own population. Besides, those cartels have to move their drugs into this country. They’re going to find a way even if it means digging a tunnel from Juarez to El Paso.”

“The Rio Grande is in the way.”

“If the tunnel were deep enough, it wouldn’t make any difference. If a man went down a half of mile and drove a mineshaft across the border, he could have it come up in El Paso in some damned warehouse and move things in and out by truck. Put in some kind of a cover operation, say a wholesaler of some kind, and it would be just dumb luck if we caught on to it. They could move people, drugs and about anything they wanted. If everything were controlled from the Méxican side, a little payola would shut up any objections.”

“Owen did say that all of the honest Méxican cops were dead. He was concerned about drugs too.”

“Were actually quite a ways from either of the borders so we shouldn’t have any trouble here. The closest border crossing should be San Diego and no one is going through San Diego nor will anyone for a very long time.”

“Are the cities that were hit still hot?”

“Very. There was enough of a ground blast to send a fair amount of fallout around the country. You probably got some here from San Francisco. Yuma got a good dose from San Diego and a bit from LA. That’s where I was when that happened. They used very dirty bombs. It could be decades before the areas near the blast centers cool down.”

“You’ve seen our shelter?”

“Owen gave me the tour, nice; one hell of a protection factor. What is it 10 to the 8th?”

“About. 144” of dirt divided by 3.6” equals 40. That’s about 1 trillion. About all we got was a little leakage from the tunnel and the ground entrance. We still had a protection factor off the scale.”

“With the President making those changes to the military, I doubt we’ll have any more attacks. Those modified B-1Bs can carry 36 missiles apiece and they’re fast – Mach 2.5 at altitude. They should have built those in the first place. But no, some bright boy said we didn’t need a Mach 2 bomber. Hit them hard, hit them fast and then get the hell out of Dodge.”

“I thought they dropped the SRAM program in 1991.”

“You’ve been reading too many books or seeing too many movies. They had test-fired 24 of the motors before the program was dropped. Because the US was making the B-1B non-nuclear as part of Start II, they couldn’t tell the world they’d perfected the missiles, could they? It’s just like the M1A3 Abrams program. They should really call it the M2A1 tank. It has second-generation armor, improved sighting systems, the 140mm German gun and other improvements. It has a different engine, too, the Honeywell AGT1800 that they recently developed. 1,800hp and it improves the hp to weight ratio considerably.”

“What about that new Russian tank, the Black Eagle?”

“It’s supposed to be a great improvement with 1300mm of frontal armor, a 152mm gun with autoloader and no crew in the turret. They didn’t employ any of them against Germany so it’s anyone’s guess whether they ever built them or not.”

Russia dropped both the Black Eagle and the T-95.

“It makes me wonder what kind of deal Powell struck with Putin.”

“Probably gave him Iran for leaving Europe alone. We had most of their military destroyed, it would be a cakewalk for the Russians to go in and grab the country. The only country they’d have to pass through to get to Iran would be Azerbaijan and it’s less than 200km north to south.”

o

“Marilyn and I decided to go ahead and sell the house, Jim. Providing that Becky and you don’t object to my continuing to park these mobile homes here.”

“Gene, it doesn’t make a lot of sense for you to move them. Now that they’ve been occupied, the dealer won’t want to use them as displays. We finally have enough people on the farm to defend it until the Sheriff can get some Deputies here. If you want to restart your grocery wholesale business, it’s only a few miles to Reno, we can commute.”

“I didn’t own the building, Jim. I was negotiating to buy it when the Chinese attacked. There is only a little material handling equipment left, I may sell it or bring some of it here. It was difficult in good times to compete with Wal-Mart and Costco. I’m not reo-

pening. If I can get the pension money out, I'll distribute shares to Royce, Abel and you. This is a nice little operation and there's more money in these specialty brands we're selling, not that I need the money one-way or the other. Money can't buy you happiness."

o

"We're shutting down the security operation, Becky. It looks like things are going to get back to normal."

"What's normal, Jim? The last two years have been a nightmare. About the only thing that hasn't happened is a 9.0 earthquake or one of the calderas erupting. Did you see that commentary on TV? The ice caps are melting at an accelerated rate. They said it would inundate much of the coast."

"They're just trying to scare people; it's all old news, Becky. Yes the Arctic Ice Cap is melting, so what? The way I heard it was that we wouldn't be in trouble until the Antarctic Ice Cap melted. If people had been paying any attention to weather trends, they'd see that there are more hurricanes, more tornadoes and a sharp increase in temperatures in the United States, especially the southwestern part of the country. If it gets to the point that we can't irrigate, we could have trouble with our garden, but other than that I see nothing to be alarmed about."

"What can we do about water?"

"Put in a water tank and a new, deeper well."

"If you're going to do it, you ought to do it now, honey. I don't know how big the well tank is but when everyone is using water, there is almost no pressure."

"In that case, I'll put in the tank first. If we elevate it, gravity will give us water pressure and it would be the easiest thing to do. We'll build a 4-story enclosed tower with a 2,000-gallon tank on top. I check around for a well driller in Reno on Monday."

o

"Gene, I'm going to need help building a water tower, any ideas?"

"How high and how large of a tank?"

"4 stories and a 2,100-gallon tank."

"I'll have Royce and Abel cut some jack pines for corner posts. Is rustic ok or do you want to use finished lumber?"

“Whatever will work. The driller is coming tomorrow to drill a new well and the tank is on order from California. It should be here next week. Because we have more people and more livestock, the driller suggested a 6” well pipe. He said that the old well probably only went into the surface aquifer and that he’d drill down to a deeper water source. I’m going to divert the electricity from the windmill to power the new well pump. With a battery bank and one inverter, we’ll always have water. It will be a 2hp (5kw) well pump but the inverters are rated at 5kw with a 100% overload.”

“Good idea. Marilyn told me the water pressure was low sometimes.”

“I heard the same thing from Becky. Funny no one mentioned it before.”

“They probably had other things on their minds. Are you still planning on getting a large herd of cattle?”

“Probably not, we have a lot of horses and hogs. I may just stop when I get 30 cows. Then, we can butcher all of the offspring or keep one or two heifers to replace the older cows. There’s a limit to what we can grow on 80 acres, even with good grass. As dry as it’s been getting, irrigation will be mandatory.”

o

“They’re getting the corner posts and other trees to build the frame. We probably won’t need the Sky Watch if we’re putting in a 4-story water tower. Do you think I should keep it or sell it?”

“That’s up to you. It’s bullet resistant. If you sell it, we’d have to do something to make the water tower bullet resistant.”

“True, but if I can sell the Sky Watch, I can buy other things with the money that we could use more. I’ll talk to the Sheriff and see if he knows anyone who might be interested in it. We’ll pull the radios and antennas and add those to the water tower. We could use the 3rd floor for an Ops Center. As far as protecting the place goes, I’m going to get some Spectra Shield level five material and wrap the entire tower in that. I know a guy who uses it in building armored cars. He buys transparent armor in sheets, so I’ll get him to cut us windows.”

o

“Washoe County bought the Sky Watch, and I got very little less than I paid for it. I used the money to buy two sheets of transparent armor and all of the materials to encase the tower. If we enclose the water tank, it will be bullet resistant too.”

“We won’t need windows anywhere except on the 3rd story. What do you think one 2’x8’ window on all four sides?”

“That would be the easiest to install, sure. I’ll check on that. Is the well done?”

“Yeah 2 days, can you believe it? \$7,200.”

“How much a foot?”

“\$13 plus all of those extra charges, 6” well casing isn’t cheap. But that includes the cost of the well pump.”

“Let’s set the tank and get it plumbed in. We can do the front and back and then the sides. Where do you want the door, the back?”

“I suppose, what are you using for a door?”

“Some of the Spectra Shield. We’ll put in a sliding door like you have on the basement tunnel and have it overlap on all of the edges.”

“That stuff doesn’t weight very much, are you sure it is as strong as they claim?”

“It weighs 30% less than Kevlar and yes, its level V stuff. When we’re done, you can take a scrap to the range and test it for yourself.”

o

And then, there was the big meeting.

“I called this meeting to discuss our operation. First let me thank everyone for all of his or her hard work over the past 2 years. It’s been a struggle but we have one heck of a business. We have the following products we’re currently selling:

- 1½-pound whole wheat bread, Standard sliced
- 1½-pound whole wheat bread, Squaw unsliced
- 5-pound bags of rolled oats, ground wheat, corn, and oats
- 5-pound bags of brown rice
- 1-pound bags of coffee beans
- 1-pound blocks of cheese
- 5-pound bags of pasta, 20 varieties
- 1-quart jars of Spaghetti sauce

During the summer, we’re also producing potatoes, tomatoes, onions, peppers, green beans, sweet corn, chilies, garlic, beets, carrots, squash, pumpkins, watermelon, lettuce and herbs. I don’t believe that we need to expand operations. I realize that with the new people here we’re dividing the profits 9 ways, but that’s still a reasonable amount of money. I’m open to suggestions?”

“What are you going to plant the additional acre in?”

“Tomatoes for our spaghetti sauce.”

“We should be able to increase the size of the pasta operation without much trouble, why don’t we do that?”

“Anyone disagree?”

“Ok, I’ll get another dryer or two. Anything else?”

“Why can’t we plant more onions and potatoes? They take the least work and produce a huge volume of food.”

“We’re getting about 16 tons of spuds per acre. How many acres of potatoes do you want?”

“I think we should put in another acre each of potatoes and onions. It would be nice to grow an acre of cucumbers and make pickles. You’re just going to have to get more jars and lids, Gene.”

“What kind of pickles do you want to make?”

“Dill, bread and butter and sweet.”

“Jim, what do you think?”

“We could also put in some brine tanks and make garlic pickles. I have no idea where we can get more jars, however.”

“Alltrista Corporation makes both the Ball and Kerr canning jars and they’re located in Indianapolis, Indiana. I’ll contact them and order jars and lids. I think they probably manufacture a disposable lid that we could use for our spaghetti sauce and pickles. Would that be agreeable?”

“Do we have enough of everything to do the expansion this year?”

“We can do everything except the potatoes. It won’t take that long to get more onion starts and we have plenty of cucumber seeds. If you want to can some potato products, we can use the eyes off the potatoes to plant the second acre.”

“Would homemade potatoes soup be ok? We should do it anyway; the potatoes are starting to get a little soft. We could can the potatoes and onions and just add the milk when we’re ready to make soup.”

“Why not? Jim, can you plow 3 extra acres?”

“It will be ready to use tomorrow night. I can plow a couple of more acres if you want to try beans again.”

“What’s our supply like?”

“We have enough left to use as seed for 2 acres, one each of pintos and small white. Or, if you’d preferred, we can also plant large white or a combination. We could even plant paquitos.”

“How about we plant two acres of pinto beans and 1 acre each of kidney, small white, large white and paquitos?”

“Ok, 6 acres instead of 3. I hope you all know what you’re letting yourself in for.”

o

Gene bought 1 boxcar of jars. He went with a plain white generic one-piece canning lid for the products they intended to sell. He also bought 12,000 lids for the products they were canning for themselves. The Hicube boxcars held 9,500 ft³ of goods, more than 9,000 cases of quart mason jars. They could also sell empty jars if they wanted to because they had ~100,000+. This was probably the size of order that a grocery chain ordered. Hell of a markup on glass jars, but the killer was the cost of freight, glass is heavy.

“I put tarps over those pallets of jars. Why did you buy so many?”

“They’re cheaper by the boxcar load.”

“Well, I don’t think we’re going to run out of jars anytime soon, do you?”

“No and the beauty of it is, we can raise our prices to cover the cost of the mason jars and lids, if we want to. The jars are recyclable.”

They had to add another classroom for canning; this operation was getting away from them. Each of the canning buildings had both long walls lined with used stoves, each of which could hold 6 canners. One wall of stoves (6 per side) was used to prepare the food for canning and the other for the pressure-cooking process. The operation was labor intensive and it ran 7 days a week once the food started being ready to harvest. With twice as many potatoes, they needed to expand the fruit cellar, but who had time? Gene hired a contractor to put it in. The only days they took off were the 4th of July and the first Monday in September.

“My dear God, what a summer.”

“It isn’t over, we’ve just gotten started. We’re going to need to figure a way to distribute the earnings differently. All 3 of your kids work at this while none of mine do. How about

we keep track of everyone's time and come up with a profit per hour? Then we could pay everyone according to the time they put in."

"Sounds fair to me, do you think we should put it to a vote?"

"We just did, it's my land and your equipment. Nobody will be able to complain that they didn't get treated fairly. Besides, it was Becky's idea."

"So you didn't really get a vote?"

"Sure I did. I got to vote whether to sleep in bed or in the recliner."

"You'd better announce it, but wait until after the picnic. If everyone has a full belly, they might be less inclined to complain. Are we going to use timecards?"

"I suppose that we'd better."

"I have a case or two of them from the warehouse in my trailer. I'll go get them while you're explaining the new system to everyone. You're going to need to have everyone fill out timecards for the time they've already worked."

"Did everyone enjoy the picnic? Good. I have an announcement to make about our new timecard system. Gene is getting the timecards from his trailer and..."

"You don't need to explain it Jim, our wives already did."

"Whoever said that men run the world?"

"Darned if I know honey," Becky laughed. "But it wasn't a woman."

o

"Well, did you test the Spectra Shield on the range?"

"Stopped both 30-06 and a 7.62x51mm armor piercing rounds. Good stuff, but it didn't stop a .50 caliber bullet until I used 2 layers. Is that why you doubled up on the 3rd and 4th stories with a double layer?"

"Yeah, the guy I got it from said you had to double it up to stop a .50 caliber bullet. That's also why the windows are so small; they're doubled up too. It still won't stop an RPG round, but neither would the Sky Watch. What I'd recommend doing now is putting in another piece of the oval culvert between the water tower and the entrance to the shelter. I don't think we'll have any more trouble, but we can't wait until we need it to put it in. Where did you get that culvert?"

"At a scrap yard in Reno."

“Let’s measure it and see how many feet we’ll need. By the way, Marilyn and I closed the escrow on our house. Sold it as is and made out pretty good because of those shelters. Housing is going for a premium in Reno. The thing is most of the new people are from California. It’s been that way for a long time. Ted was talking about selling his farm. It straddles the border and everything he had there has been moved up here.”

“Maybe I’ll buy it. I can talk to him about it. Any idea how much he wants?”

“No, but we valued this farm at \$2,000 per acre. That will be your starting point. You could give him title to the trailer they’re living in exchange for their house. Why do you want the property?”

“I don’t know. I guess that I always wanted to live in the country. How big is his farm?”

“80 acres, the same as ours. 40 acres in Nevada and 40 acres in California.”

“So if a guy got a little sneaky, he could have a California ID card and a Nevada Driver’s License?”

“I suppose so, yes. But you’d have to use different identities. Do you think you could get away with that now that the feds standardized the state Licenses?”

“I don’t know, but it’s something to consider. I’ll ask Gunny and Owen about the various IDs. They’ve probably checked enough of them in their time on active duty.”

“How about it Ted? I’ll give you \$2,000 an acre and clear title to the trailer you’re living in?”

“It will be up to Sally. Becky will get the money anyway; she’s an only child. I’ll probably have to run it by her too.”

o

“That’s up to the two of you, Daddy. I never planned on living there anyway, not since I got married. If the price is fair and you’re sure you want to sell it, go ahead.”

“We sure don’t need the money, Becky. Your mother says ok so I guess we’ll sell it to Gene and Marilyn. I’ll give the money to you to put up for our grandchildren. Your mother said to add a little of our gold to make the division come out even. I’ll be giving you 132 of the gold Eagles. Even if Jim and you decide to have another child, it will still divide evenly.”

“We talked that over Daddy and 3 is enough. I’ll put it up for them and give it to them when their ready to go to college, assuming they want to go. That will be a long time from now.”

“Your mother stopped at one, her back was killing her.”

“Tell me about it. I don’t believe that my back will ever fully recover. I had a little outpatient surgery to guarantee we don’t have any more. That’s why the first doctor’s appointment took so long. We got the twins immunized against the new flu and John his shots. I also had a laparoscopic procedure performed. It didn’t even leave a scar.”

“Did you tell your mother?”

“You can tell her if you want. Jim and I know and that’s really the only people who have to know.”

“Things have sure changed in 30 years; your mother has quite the little scar. I won’t mention it to her.”

o

“I don’t see any point in moving at the moment. We can use the barn and the other buildings for additional storage. Owen told me that I couldn’t get away with two IDs because they scan for duplicate biometric data. And, given the choice, I’d rather be a Nevada resident than a California resident.”

“What biometric data are they using?”

“A full set of fingerprints. With 4 or more prints, they have 99.99% accuracy. Add to that the digital photograph and they’ve got you. I take it that you don’t have a US Passport?”

“Never needed one. When I was in the military, the ID Card was the same as a Passport. Never wanted to go to any other country. Do we need one?”

“You can’t get into México or Canada now without a US Passport. You and Becky had better apply; it takes 6 weeks to get one.”

“What about the kids?”

“You don’t have birth certificates do you because they were born at home?”

“We did get birth certificates. It took a little extra paperwork with them being born at home with a midwife, but we got them.”

“Good, because if you didn’t have them, you’d have to follow a different procedure. To get a Passport for someone under 14 is different from getting a Passport for some who is 14 to 17 and that is different from getting one for an adult. For babies you need to prove citizenship and the relationship. All of that is in the Certified Birth Certificate. And,

you have to prove who you are. Both parents must appear, I suppose to keep one parent from stealing their child from the other parent who has custody.”

“I don’t see why we need Passports.”

“May I see your papers please? As much as it troubles me to suggest it, we’ve had Temporary Travel Permits already. It’s not so much that the country has changed as outside influences have forced temporary conditions on the country.”

“That’s Orwellian, Gene.”

“That it is. You think that uniform State Driver’s Licenses using biometric data isn’t? As far as I’m concerned, it’s just the National ID issued at a state level. There was a lot of opposition to a NIC, so they came in through the backdoor. When the State Department began requiring more stringent US Passports back in 2003, it was the beginning. Then they made state Driver’s Licenses and identity cards uniform. Next, they lowered the requirements for state identity cards down to school age children. The only thing left undone is state identity cards, meeting a standardized federal requirement, for everyone. They’re nothing more than Internal Passports. Get your External Passport now; it will make getting the Internal Passports for your kids later on easier.”

“I never thought this country would get to that.”

“It’s been imposed on the country by circumstances and other countries. Get used to it. You think they didn’t know your life history already? You were in the Army and you had a security clearance. You had a CCW and were a Reserve Police Officer. They can probably tell you how much you pass when you crap and the color. Our free society is a whole lot less free than it used to be. You’ll never be allowed in the new Capitol they’re building in Kansas without proper identity papers.”

“I protest!”

“A couple of years ago, I was your employer. Because of the war we more or less became partners supplying the basic resources to a co-op. There isn’t an employer-employee relationship in our current venture. We 10 families are all in this together and you and I get reimbursed for the supplies and everyone who works shares evenly in the profits. There’s another name for a system like that, but I won’t challenge you by bringing it up, I’ll just leave it at cooperative. But in reality this is a commune with a similar interests based on economics and security. It even has entrance requirements that are based on whether or not a person is willing to defend and support the Constitution. Think about it.”

“I hadn’t thought about it, but you’re right Gene. Karl Marx would be very proud, but when is the state going to wither away? We do share evenly and the new timecards just reinforce that, don’t they? It is a case where each receives according to his or her contribution to the whole venture. Don’t say anything to the others because it might upset

them. But unlike those authoritarian societies, this isn't done at the point of a gun. That's the beauty of the 2nd amendment, everyone has a gun and very little is state mandated."

"Are you sure?"

"No."

o

The New Colossus

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

Provided you have a biometric Passport and the proper Visas. It couldn't happen here, but it already did and the golden door was made of brass. The wretched refuse had imposed new conditions on the freest country in the world. They didn't say, *Could I see your papers please?* Instead they asked for 2 forms of ID, which changed when the Congress mandated uniform state Driver's Licenses or Identity Cards. Remember when they wanted to see a credit card to allow you to write a check? How many people said, *If I had a credit card, I wouldn't need a check!* They only required Travel Permits on a temporary basis due to the war or the terrorist attacks. When would it all end? Never, the country with open arms had closed them. There wasn't any casting of blame; it was just plain too late for that. Were the leaders of this country at fault in trying to export Democracy?

The NRA had tried to raise money to oppose the anti-gun nuts in the United Nations. Not enough people could spare the money, but when the Chinese had destroyed the UN, it didn't matter, the UN moved to Brussels and the US got serious about withdrawing from the UN. They didn't do it, but they should have. France had pushed for the European Union until it fell on its face, both the European Union and France, if the truth were known. Congress approved combining all intelligence agencies and the FBI into the DHS, the first step was just the National Director of Intelligence. The US had always

had a National Police Force, the US Marshals Service, but now it was out in the open and the newly appointed US Supreme Court upheld the legality of the whole new national scheme. People had stopped being so liberal because the Chinese and the terrorists had mugged them; it just took them a while to recognize it.

Gene had seen the light come on, many others hadn't. *Welcome to the freest county in the world, we have a new set of rules; may we see your papers please?* It couldn't happen here, because it already had, one new rule at a time, you just didn't know it. If the United States was so damned free, why did we object to illegal aliens? How many people in the US were really Native Americans? Being a Native American no longer meant you were Indian. Don't laugh, being a Native American meant you were born here. Is that a chill that just ran up your spine? Get used to it, and you can quit hating the ACLU now, they support the Bill of Rights, including the 10th Amendment.

o

"Jim, what does it all mean?"

"Becky, I guess that the United States has a new set of rules."

"When did this all happen?"

"I guess it began in 1787, honey, but the United States finally grew up. But, we're still the freest country in the world. Welcome to the 21st Century."

"I don't want to get Identity papers, Jim."

"Becky, you already have them; like Gene says, *Get used to it.*"

"Do we really need Passports? I didn't know we were going anywhere."

"Maybe not, sweetheart, but let's get them now before they make the requirements even more stringent."

"Ok, but I don't like it. It is just the first step in a program where we'll end up with those computer chips embedded in our arms to identify us. You know, like the chips they put in dogs and cats."

"That will be our line in the sand. On another subject, I was visiting with Owen about the people who attacked those farms in California. Nobody ever caught them. I believe that that makes our security here on the farm tentative at best. Therefore we're going to keep someone in the Op Center 24/7."

"Now I really don't like what is happening to this country."

"Nothing's changed, Becky. And, the more it changes, the more it stays the same."

Jim and Becky – Chapter 11 – Passages

Obviously the writer of the following piece doesn't like the war in Iraq or George W. Bush. I don't subscribe to the Fable, but it's interesting. How close to the truth is it?

A Fable by John Liechty

Once upon a time there was a place known as The Greatest Country in the World. This place had forgotten its true name. Grandparents had told children had told grandchildren had told great-grandchildren for so long now: "You live in The Greatest Country in the World (and incidentally that makes you The Greatest People in the World)," that the true name of the land had been lost.

Predictably, the Greatest Country in the World was led by The Greatest Government in the World in turn led by The Greatest Emperor in the World. The Emperor was selected every four years and was to be an individual uniquely suited to lead – a person of great integrity, practicality, courage, wisdom, intelligence, discernment, eloquence, generosity, compassion, honesty, humility, and even-handedness. By lucky coincidence, or perhaps as some insisted by Divine Intervention a certain Rich Young Ruler, son of a former Emperor, announced a desire to be the Anointed One. "I shall lead you by popular demand!" he vowed to The Greatest People in the World, and opened so many bags of gold that they very nearly demanded him. Not quite, but it didn't matter in the end. The Rich Young Ruler finagled an unorthodox anointment, and head bowed in humility, ascended the throne with a retinue of grand viziers.

At The Greatest Expense in the World, The Greatest Country in the World maintained The Greatest Army in the World and The Greatest Armaments. This weaponry was capable of annihilating the worlds people a couple of dozen times over. A greater boon to Civilization could hardly have been imagined.

"It's a lucky thing we control The Greatest Armaments in the World," confided The Greatest Nation in the World to the less great nations. "Otherwise some Rogue Nation might get them and turn out to be a Threat to Freedom." The less great nations had several options. They could nod their heads in vigorous agreement, pretend to nod their heads in vigorous agreement, immerse their heads in the sand, or indulge in the foolish option of defiantly sticking their necks out, thus risking Liberation.

Out of the blue one day and in spite of its Greatest Army and Greatest Armaments, The Greatest Country in the World was attacked. Many people were killed and the whole world was watching. "Who has done this thing?" cried the people, turning to their Emperor for guidance. "Why? What can we do?"

"It was one man," answered The Rich Young Ruler with absolute certainty, and he told the people of an evil crackpot/rogue billionaire living in a remote cave of the roughest nation of them all. "As for the why, that's simple. He envied your freedom. We must declare War on Evil at once and bomb this threat away." The grand viziers nodded wisely

as The Rich Young Ruler explained to The Greatest People in the World (who were being quietly invited to cough up the gold for a War on Evil) that their freedom was beyond price. And many were persuaded. For the people had been assured for a very long time that in addition to being The Greatest, they were The Freest People in the World. Often as not this meant they were free to grow as obese and indolent as they liked, free to live in fear and paranoia, free to make pornography a leading industry, free to buy goods they didn't really need or want thanks to the cheap sweat of the less great world's children, free to say anything they liked so long as it didn't matter, free to run like rats in a maze or sell their own grandmothers in deference to the Greatest Economy In The World, free to build bigger prisons and occupy them, free to produce and sell and consume any snake oil under the sun so long as it made money. But Free they were, and many were persuaded.

Every day The Rich Young Ruler conferred with his divinity (The Greatest Divinity in the World, not too surprisingly). Every day his trusty viziers wheeled in the sacred Prestors and kindled the holy smoke that together might allow the Anointed One a tête-à-tête with his divine confidante. One day the Greatest Leader in the World felt moved to declare: "God is my Favorite Philosopher!" And some of the people purred. "One Nation Under God!" clamored the more strident among them. "God Bless The Greatest Country In The World!"

After several consultations with his favorite philosopher, The Rich Young Ruler announced that capital punishment, prison, corporate irresponsibility, debt, war, and a more thoroughly gelded media were The Divinity's Delight. His viziers smiled and purred, and so did some of the people. One day the Vizier of War wheeled in a massive Prestor. It wobbled on its steel carriage, and waited. The Vizier of War struck a match and a plume of smoke rolled toward heaven. "O Favorite Philosopher," The Rich Young Ruler addressed the Prestor, careful not to look too closely into it. "What do I do next?" "Declare pre-emptive war," replied God without a moment's hesitation. "Do unto others before they do unto you."

"I hear and obey O Favorite Philosopher," replied the Emperor, humbly lowering his head while a throng of select eunuchs converged with their cameras. Prestors and viziers came and went. Flashbulbs shone, the smoke rolled. At the end of the day, when The Rich Young Ruler had jogged and dined and was debating whether to turn in early or take in some of the Monday Night Game, a strange thing happened. The fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the palace wall just as they had in the palace of King Belshazzar. But unlike Belshazzar's, the Emperor's color did not change, his thoughts did not alarm him, his limbs did not give way, his knees did not knock together.

"What the devil?" he cried in a tone more than halfway contemptuous. MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN?? Sounds like Greek to me." And so the Greatest Leader in the World of The Greatest Country in the World went to bed without even trying to read the writing on the wall, merely making a note to himself that in the morning he would inform The Greatest People in the World that he had decided to take a month off.

Daniel 5:1-31

Key Verse: 5:25

"This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN."

Daniel chapter 5 is a story about the handwriting of a human hand on the wall during a wine-drinking banquet King Belshazzar hosted for his thousand nobles, wives and concubines. In fact the foreboding use of the words: "The hand writing on the wall" comes from this chapter in the Bible. Moreover from this chapter we will find when alcohol drinking and irreverence towards God is mixed then indeed the hand writing of the wall indicating God's judgment is just around the corner. Let us now learn from the mistakes of Belshazzar so we may not make the same one.

"This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

"But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." 2 Timothy 3:1-7

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"No single job on this farm is any more important than any other, unless it's security. I realize that we haven't had any trouble in quite a while. Nevertheless, there are bad guys out there people. Owen tells me that they never got the people in California that raided those farms and did the killing. Everyone had better get used to the idea that wherever you go, you need to have a weapon and some ammunition. We've installed rifle racks in every building on the place; use them. Letting your guard down for only a moment could get you killed. Wear your pistols and carry your rifles."

"I agree with Jim. How much trouble is it to carry a rifle and slip that ALICE gear over your shoulders? We added a single magazine pouch to the stock of your rifles, so you can easily carry 7 magazines. We added a berm between the front of the trailers and I-80 so the homes should be safer. We're also cutting trenches to your homes and all of the buildings so that you need not expose yourselves. There aren't many of us here and absent martial law, we wholly dependent on the County Sheriff to respond if we're attacked. Nobody in his right mind would do that during daylight hours, but don't bank on it not happening."

“Our harvest this year is beginning to wrap up and it has been a better year than anticipated. You youngsters will be back in school tomorrow and I want to thank you for all of your hard work. Our future operations won’t be any larger than what we’ve done this year, perhaps smaller. School officials raised an issue about your fanny packs so keep them in your lockers. They’re concerned about the Gerber Diesel Multi-plier. If there is a major problem affecting the country, we’ll pick all of you up at school. Whatever you do, don’t get on a school bus in that instance. Enjoy the picnic, Labor Day only comes once a year.”

“Jim when did you plan on distributing the initial share of the profits?”

“I have the list and we’ve computed an hourly rate. After people have eaten, they can come see me and I’ll distribute the gold and silver. I also have a printout of the spreadsheet Becky and I used if anyone has a question. We prepared a sheet for each person showing the overall calculation of the hourly rate and his or her individual computation. Future profit division will be on the future hours worked. If you young people want a slice of the pie, you’d better sign up for security details on nights and weekends. Homework comes first, however.”

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“Damn it is hot. What did we ever do before they invented air conditioners?”

“The same thing we’re doing now, Gene, sweating. Here’s your sheet and your bag of coins, don’t spend it all in one place.”

“Heavy, we must have done very well.”

“We did and we still have half of the spuds to dig. Beans were better this year too. We can skip them for a couple of years unless you want to add them to our product mix. We won’t be able to sell a lot, but maybe a ton or so.”

“What about our slaughtering operation?”

“We’ll start doing chickens this weekend. We have about 500 to butcher and process. It’s going to take some kind of an assembly line process for a couple of weekends to do them all. We’ll do the hogs in November and after they’re cut and wrapped, deliver the remainder to slaughtering plant. I’m going to slaughter one of the cows that is losing production to get boneless beef and 3 steers. The rest we can sell. This is going to be a very good year indeed.”

“I have the barn and the machine shed down on my farm filled with hay and we processed feed for the livestock.”

“Give me a copy of the invoice of what you had to buy and I’ll reimburse you.”

Jim took his salary bag and counted out full reimbursement to Gene. Although the government had begun issuing gold certificates finally, they preferred to deal in coin. The disadvantage was that it was heavy but the advantage was that it didn't burn. They had a set of lock boxes from a closed motel that had been installed in the armory in the shelter. Becky had the master key and everyone had his or her own lockbox. Some of the kids had heavy lock boxes, especially Jim, Becky and John. Becky had divided up the gold from Ted and each of the kids had 44 coins in their lockbox, ~48 ounces of gold.

Jim and Becky each had individual boxes and in Jim's case, two. He'd filled one and was working on the second. Gene was working on his third. Most of the people had one, but they were getting full. This was another reason for security. Among the various boxes, the residents probably had 100 pounds of the gold Eagles and untold silver.

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Britain withdrew its final contingent of troops from France today, ending the participation of the United Kingdom in the war in Europe. Germany has withdrawn all but a division of its forces and continues to hand governmental functions back to the French. In the Middle East, Russia began shipping oil from Bandar Abbas. Oil is holding at a fixed price of \$45 per barrel. Two rebuilt refineries came back online this week, sharply increasing the available fuel. The price of home heating oil, diesel fuel and gasoline dropped sharply. Experts said that the fuel crisis is over and there are ample stocks of home heating oil for the coming winter. Last year the winter was warmer than expected and although additional production of home heating oil was initially thought to be necessary, refineries were able to continue to produce diesel fuel. With the completion of the reconstruction of the rail lines, the US demand for energy dropped to the lowest level in recent years.

In Tel Aviv, Israeli forces killed two members of Hamas who were sought in connection with a bombing last week of an Israeli school. The suicide bomber killed 23 children and injured more than 100. To date, Israel has succeeded in killing more than 50% of the known Hamas leadership including all of the founders. Hamas has replaced the PLO as the principal representative of the Palestinian population. As recently as 2004, Hamas represented only 30% of the Palestinians. A poll more recently show that has risen to 55%.

"What's the price of diesel fuel now?"

"\$2.499. I can't be certain but I would expect it to break \$2.00 before the end of the year."

"All we have for storage are those two tankers we buried. We should see if we could get some service station tanks and put them in. Perhaps a double-walled 15,000-gallon fiberglass tank for diesel and a 5,000-gallon tank for gasoline. That way when the price hits \$1.999 we could fill them. It won't be long before those tankers start leaking anyway."

“I’ll look around. Did Becky and you get your Passports?”

“What a pain in the butt. We got them for us and for the kids. \$335 plus \$10 a head for the pictures and another \$10 a head for fingerprints. You’d think if they wanted you to have the papers, they’d charge a reasonable price.”

“I’ve been encouraging everyone here to get an (External) Passport, Jim. There is now a Bill in the House to require all people regardless of age to have a state issued Identity Card. It doesn’t make a lot of sense to me; kids under five wouldn’t carry a purse or a wallet. So, who carries the kids IDs?”

“Becky was angry at the idea of even getting Passports. I figured what the hell; I’ve been in the Army so they had all of my data anyway. I mean remember when they passed a law that every child had to have a Social Security number? They just keep chipping away. We agreed to draw the line in the sand when the government comes up with a program to inject identity chips.”

“The technology already exists you know.”

“Yeah with those things they inject into dogs and cats. She mentioned that too. What she didn’t say is that it will be the Mark of the Beast.”

“Do you believe that?”

“Why not? They’re easy to insert and a bitch to remove. They have to be tiny; they go in through a hypodermic syringe. The only thing that I see lacking is a standardized system of identification. At the moment the various animal systems aren’t compatible.”

“You will know when they do it, buddy. There will be some sort of scare they drum up that everyone in the country has to be immunized for some bug that will kill you if you aren’t immunized. After that, you’ll have a number that is uniquely you. They’ll tie that number into a database somewhere and it will have your fingerprints and photo. Of course, I expect that you’ll need to be tested before you get the vaccine and they’ll draw a little blood. Then they’ll have your DNA. All they’ll need after that is an iris scan and they’ll have every common unique thing there is to know about you in that damned database. That’s what it is going to be: fingerprints, digital photo, iris scan and DNA. You’ll be totally unique.”

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“Gene scared the crap out of me today.”

“How?”

“He got to discussing what the government would do to identify all of us. He claimed that fingerprints, digital photo, iris scan and DNA would constitute a unique identifica-

tion. He even laid out a scenario where they could inject everyone with one of those pet identity chips.”

“How?”

“He said that there will be some sort of scare they drum up that everyone in the country has to be immunized for, like some bug that will kill you if you aren’t immunized.”

“I told you so.”

“Yes... you did. You keep a heads up on the health of the nation if you can, so we’ll know when it happens.”

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It wasn’t difficult to find tanks or to have them installed. They pumped most of the fuel from the old tanks into the new and dug up the old. They were badly rusted from having been in the ground for about 2 years because no one had thought to apply a coat of tar. The expected life of the double-walled tanks was 30 years. Mel called to say he had propane if they needed it. He could sign a contract and give them a guaranteed price. While products manufactured from crude oil were going down in price, the price LNG/Propane had long since stabilized. A contract would be good, provided they could get a second industrial sized tank, for free.

“Look at it this way Mel, you get to start out with 3 loads to fill the new tank and a 4th to top off the one we’re using.”

“What do you need 18,000-gallons of propane for? The war is over and the way they have this country sealed up there won’t be any more terrorist acts.”

“Mel do you want to sell 12,000-gallons of propane or not? At \$1.50 a gallon, I’d think you’d be delighted.”

“I charge everyone else \$1.60. It’s not such a good deal for me, you know.”

“Just say no, Mel. Do a Nancy Reagan.”

“I’ll deliver the tank tomorrow, where do you want it set?”

“Next to the other one, less plumbing to put in.

“Why did we want 18,000-gallons of propane? Mel was right, a war doesn’t seem likely and I’m not sure there are any terrorists left to cause the US any harm.”

“Remember you talked about the way the government would try and get everyone set up with an injected computer chip? I think it’s going to happen soon. I for one won’t take it lying down.”

“Right, and how are you going to prevent it?”

“Becky thinks that if they use an epidemic story they’ll provide pre-filled syringes instead of bottles of vaccine. That’s the way you buy the injectable chips for the animals. Since she’s a RN, she said she’d just get the bottles of vaccine from the doctor and do the injections. We aren’t going to go the other way.”

“I’m not either, Jim, but I don’t see how we can avoid it. Once they declare the program completed, anyone who doesn’t scan would no doubt be arrested.”

“All we need to do is order some of the pet IDs. If just one of us gets injected, we can fish out the damned little glass capsule and determine the brand. Then we’ll order some for our pets and inject those into ourselves. The ones that Becky gets to inject in us can put into our livestock. We’ll scan ok, but the ID won’t mean anything. Do you want to be Spot or Frisky?”

“Some choice. I just want to be left alone.”

Ready to go?”

“Where are we going?”

“Reno.”

“Why are we going to Reno?”

“Shopping.”

“Shopping? Be still my heart. Do you have a fever Jim?”

“I just thought that you might to go shopping.”

“The last time I was in Reno was when you took me out to dinner. Twice in the same month? Are you sure you’re feeling ok?”

“The new Wal-Mart is having a Grand Opening. I thought we might shop for clothes for the kids.”

“Let me take your temperature, you must be running a fever.”

“Jeez, try to do something nice for someone and they think you’re sick or crazy.”

“I’ll ask your mother to watch the kids.”

“Are you sure you have enough?”

“It was on clearance.”

“How can it be on clearance, they just opened the store today?”

“It was marked down 25%.”

“Right after they marked it up 30%. Say, would you mind if we stopped by the Dodge dealer on the way home?”

“What for? Is there something wrong with the pickup?”

“Yes there is, it’s old. They brought out a new hybrid vehicle that gets 35mpg and it’s a diesel.”

“What kind of mileage do we get now?”

“About 12mpg.”

“We can look.”

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“Let me get this straight, it’s a diesel, electric or automatic? Please explain.”

“Most people would leave the vehicle in automatic and the truck runs as a true hybrid vehicle. However, when you need power, you can switch it to pure diesel and have full power. If you’re just buzzing around town, you can switch it to pure electric and re-charge the batteries at home. With the optional battery pack, you can improve your mileage to 40mpg. In the pure electric mode, it will still run the engine if the batteries get low.”

“What kind of trade in on my old vehicle?”

“Nothing. I suggest that you sell it to a private party. What’s it going to take for me to put you in this vehicle?”

“I’d want some options.”

“Name it, we have lots.”

“12K Warn winch on the front, bed liner, auxiliary fuel tank, towing package and 4WD.”

“What color do you want?”

“Becky, what color do you like?”

“Red.”

“I like the brown better. How long to get them ready?”

“Them?”

“One brown and one red.”

“With the options all installed? Tomorrow afternoon. You want 2?”

“Maybe 2 and maybe none, let’s talk price.”

“As described, \$48 thousand, each.”

“I’ll give you \$40 thousand, each, cash.”

“\$46 is the best I can do.”

“Ready to go honey?”

“I suppose. Nice vehicle that red pickup.”

“Thanks but no thanks.”

“\$44. That’s my bottom line.”

\$42 and that’s my last offer.”

“Split the difference?”

“If all of the tanks are full.”

“Congratulations. Now how did you intend to pay for these? We have several financing options available.”

“Cash.”

“Hey Shorty do we take cash for a vehicle?”

“He says yes. Of course there’s tax, registration, destination charges and so forth.”

“Just give me a total.”

“\$87,600.”

“Becky, count out 73 Eagles, please. I think the price is 73 ounces of gold, agreed?”

“Hey Shorty, do we take gold?”

“What was that all about?”

“My lockbox was getting full.”

“Open a second one.”

“That was the second one.”

◦

“Nice, the red one for Becky?”

“Yes. Do you want to run down to Vegas with me?”

“What’s in Vegas?”

“Amateur Electronics Supply. I want to pick up new ham radios for both pickups. Then if Owen can get me a pair of SINCGARS, I want to add those too.”

“What no CB?”

“AES sells CBs too.”

“I should replace the radio that was blown up in the hut.”

“Then come along, Gene. Maybe you can steer me to the people who sold you the business radios. Figured I might just as well go whole hog. Damned pickups are going to look like antenna farms anyway.”

“The business radios are Motorola CM300, 32-channel radios.”

“VHF or UHF?”

“VHF, but you can get either.”

“I’d like the same 4 frequencies you use. I was planning on operating the radios on your license.”

“Maybe I should get more of the radios and put one in everyone’s vehicle. They make a handheld too, the CP200. Do you think we need those?”

“Ideally, we could equip everyone on the farm with a portable; at least everyone 15 and up. Let me explain, partner. I figure that it’s just a matter of time before they do that injectable tracking device. I explained how I intend to avoid that but I believe in my heart that it’s going to cause major trouble around this country. Consider how many people are opposed to those pseudo national ID cards that they have in the form of Driver’s Licenses and state ID Cards. Everyone has to get one now so they can apply for a Social Security number and you have to have a Social Security number. Like everything else, it’s just when, not if.”

“We have 15 personal vehicles, not counting yours, so I’ll get 17 of the CM300s. I can save the 2 unused old radios for backups or expansion. Maybe I’d better get 30 of the handhelds. I take it that if push comes to shove, you intend to fight?”

“Oh yeah, big time.”

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“Gene installed radios in our vehicles and gave us a handheld for every person. What’s going on Jim?”

“Security upgrade Owen. Say, what are chances you could get any more of the SINCGARS?”

“I retired.”

“Right, but all the years you had in must mean that you know somebody.”

“I do, but if I recall, you already have two, one in the shelter and one in the OP Center.”

“That’s right. I was thinking of adding them to as many vehicles as possible.”

“I suppose you want the Spearheads, too?”

“What’s a Spearhead?”

“That’s the handheld SINCGARS. The man pack radio is a 12-volt radio compared to the others that use 24 volts. That means that I would have to try and get the man packs and we’d have to bypass the battery and install them in the vehicle.”

“Ok, can you do it?”

“Well... it would require some encouragement.”

“How much encouragement?”

“About a pound, I guess. Gold, not silver.”

“How would you handle it?”

“Damned carefully. I could persuade a buddy who is getting out soon to order some replacements and we would probably need to hijack the shipment in route. The man packs are complete with antenna and everything. Say I could get as many as I wanted, how many would you need?”

“20 man packs and 30 Spearheads.”

“Damn, why so many?”

“Three delivery trucks and 17 personal vehicles. We’d want a handheld for everyone the same as the handheld business radios. Look Owen, I think we have trouble coming. One of these days in the not too distant future, the government is going to require everyone to be injected with one of those tracking chips. Becky has an idea how to avoid our getting caught with them, but I’m not going to take this lying down. There is nothing that I know of in the Constitution that would permit the government to do something like that.”

“I’ll talk to him, but with that many units, he’ll probably want more of an incentive.”

“Any idea how much?”

“Probably about 20 ounces, one per man pack.”

“That’s more than they cost the government.”

“True, but if he got caught, he’d be locked up for 20 years and lose his pension.”

“Ok, we can handle that. Talk to him and we’ll talk to a first class radio technician about getting them installed in the vehicles.”

“No need, remember the Corporal?”

“Yeah, why?”

“He’s hurting for money. Couple of ounces of gold would go a long way towards getting him to install them and he has the radio code disc. You know that they can change the encoding with a disc don’t you? Besides, we’ll need an inside man to know about frequency changes.”

“Ok, set it all up, do you want the money now?”

“Might go better if I could tinkle those coins in my friend’s face.”

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“How did it go?”

“Good. The Pentagon placed a 7-year, \$2.5 billion dollar order with ITT back in 2005 during Iraqi Freedom. He said that they have a lot of radios stored and once he runs the requisition up through the chain of command the radios will be coming. He also said he’d get us 36 of the Spearheads while he was at it and who was I to argue? He’ll give me the shipment details and it will be up to us to liberate them from the shipper. I had a visit with the Corporal and he’s our man. I hope you don’t mind, but I prepaid him a little. He gave me this set of discs in exchange. It’s a duplicate set of what the NNG uses.”

“How long on the radios?”

“About 3 weeks.”

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“Here’s the deal guys, I rigged up an antenna mount for the radios. You can connect the antenna to the mount, it’s the same connector as on the radio, and connect the coax to the radio. You replace the battery with an adapter I’ve made for the radios and they’re a vehicle radio. If you need to use it as a man pack, you reinstall the battery and the antenna and it’s portable.”

“If you want to do the vehicles now, we can get started. We should have the radios in a couple of weeks and you can do the modification to them.”

“You misunderstood, it’s no modification to the radio, just replace the battery with the adapter plate. I can have everything done in 2 days. Owen prepaid me 2 ounces, how about 4 more ounces to finish the job?”

“You’d better get started Corporal.”

“My name is Joe.”

“Hi Joe, I’m Jim Young. Where do you live?”

“I don’t know. The wife and I got an eviction notice.”

“Do you work?”

“Lost my job and couldn’t find another. That’s why we lost the apartment.”

“Joe, I’m Gene, I might have a solution to your problem.”

“What?”

“I own 80 acres down on the state line a couple of miles from here. We don’t have anyone to watch the place and the house is sitting empty. If you’d be interested, let me know and we can discuss it.”

“What’s to discuss? Best offer I’ve had in my whole life.”

“Do you have kids?”

“No. We couldn’t have any. Can you help us move? I don’t have a truck.”

“Abel, how about you and Royce get Joe’s address and go pick up their furniture. Joe, you’ll need to call your wife or write a note to tell her it’s ok. They’ll move your furniture to the farmhouse and we’ll stock it while you’re working on the vehicles.”

“Got no phone, so it will be a note. Maybe one of the ladies could go with them and give Jenna a hand.”

“Jenna?”

“Yeah, do you know her?”

“I used to know a Jenna, a while back. Go ahead and start on the vehicles Joe.”

“Becky, do you know that Corporal out there working on your pickup? He says his name is Joe and he’s married to a woman named Jenna.”

“No, it couldn’t be.”

“Yep. Gene hired him.”

“To install the radios?”

“To live in your folks’ old farmhouse and guard the place.”

“That’s him alright. Is he married to your Jenna?”

“She’s not mine and never was, you know that. If he is, I can understand why he’s broke. I can’t believe that she threw a diamond engagement ring in the trash. She had no sense of money.”

“Small world.”

“Too damned small if you ask me. At least they’ll be living at Gene’s farm instead of here. I wonder if she’s still anti-survivalist?”

“You could ask her.”

“You ask her. I might just punch her lights out. Joe said that they didn’t have any kids, I wonder if it was him or her?”

“Humph. You just keep your eyes on home, fella.”

“It’s going to be interesting to see how this plays out. I can just visualize the two of you with claws extended.”

“Bull, I have a 7.62x51mm rifle. If she even looks crossways towards you I won’t be using any claws.”

“Down dear.”

“I mean it.”

“I’m sure you do. I’ll fill Gene in about the situation. You’ll need to get some food around for us to take down to Gene’s farm.”

“Ok, just as soon as I add the rat poison.”

So, the plot thickens, Jim’s ex-fiancée and Becky’s ex-boyfriend were apparently married to each other and would be living on the farm that Becky was raised on. At least, hopefully, Jenna wouldn’t pick Becky’s old bedroom as their bedroom. How would Jenna react to the rule that everyone was armed all of the time? It wasn’t the same world or country as it was back when Jim and Jenna were engaged.

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Joe was good as his word and had the antenna mounts installed in 2 days. It took him a third morning to install the adapter plates. When Jenna had arrived at the farm she had no idea that this was the farm that Becky had been raised on. And nothing was said to either Joe or Jenna about who Jim and Becky were. Gene had trouble keeping a straight face most of the time and he had gone down to his farm to meet Jenna. When he came back, he had a smirk on his face that you couldn’t have washed off with a steam-cleaning machine.

“What did she used to look like Jim?”

“I have an old snap in my wallet, I’ll show you.”

“I would have thought you’d toss something like that.”

“I only take it out if I need a reason to get angry in a hurry.”

“Yep, that’s her, about 60 pounds ago. She must go 180 now.”

“Little miss prim and proper, fat? I can’t believe it. No wonder Joe is so skinny, she must eat both of their food.”

“I’m going to tell Becky.”

“You do that Gene, she would never believe me if I told her.”

“Can I take the picture?”

“Yeah, I don’t need it any more. Tell Becky that I dug it out of a scrap box or something. She doesn’t need to know I had it in my wallet.”

“Becky this was the Jenna that Jim was engaged to, right?”

“Right. I suppose she’s matured and is a raving beauty now.”

“Not exactly. Try and visualize the same woman weighing 180 pounds.”

“5’4 and 180? Jeez. I’m going to drive down there and see for myself. Maybe I should have put rat poison in the food.”

o

“Hi, I’m Becky, we used to live here and my Daddy sold the farm to Gene.”

“Jenna.”

“I know; we have a mutual acquaintance.”

“Oh, who?”

“Jim Young.”

“What ever happened to him?”

“He got married. They had twins and then a little boy. He lives 2 miles up the road.”

“He was some kind of crackpot. Thought that the world was going to end. I’m not surprised he made it through the war, he probably had a ton of food stored and a damned tank.”

“Actually he has 2 V-100s, they’re armored cars. But, he did have a lot of food stored. His wife and he run a farming operation together with Gene and I hear that they’re pretty well off. They bake bread and sell it and other food items at the farmer’s market in Reno. You’re not wearing your sidearm?”

“In the house? Are you nuts?”

“It’s a condition of your employment with Gene.”

“That’s what Joe said.”

“I used to date him, you know, a few years back.”

“Who, Jim or Joe?”

“Yes.”

“Oh, you’re that Becky. The one that Joe went out with a couple of times.”

“That’s me.”

“Did you date Jim before or after we were engaged?”

“After. Well, Jenna, I have to go. I was just doing my Welcome Wagon thing. You’d better start wearing that sidearm unless you want Joe to lose his job and you lose your new home.”

“So, who did Jim end up marrying?”

“A neighbor girl he grew up with.”

“What was her name?”

“Oh you probably wouldn’t know her, Rebecca Jean Baker.”

“Nope, never heard of her. Nice to meet you.”

“Bye, Jenna.”

◦

“I understand that you went down and met Jenna.”

“Meow.”

“What does that mean?”

“Honey, you’re the luckiest man alive.”

“So did you fill her in?”

“I told her that you got married and had three kids. I also told her that you and I dated after she broke up with you.”

“But you didn’t tell her that you were married to me.”

“Sure I did. She asked who you married and I told her Rebecca Jean Baker, a neighbor girl.”

“And, what did she say?”

“She said that she’d never heard of her. I’d say she’s closer to 200 pounds, though. She wasn’t wearing her sidearm, you’d better mention that to Gene.”

“Jenna wouldn’t handle a gun if her life depended on it. I’ll tell Gene, but I don’t think it will do much good. She’s probably the person they named sheeple after.”

“You’d better do something, Jim. Joe wasn’t that bad of a person and he doesn’t deserve this. You know if we got her working in the bakery, we could sweat the weight off of her. Never mind, I’ll talk to Gene myself.”

◦

“Gene, we need to talk.”

“What about Becky?”

“Jenna.”

“Still worried about Jim? Forget it; he only has eyes for you.”

“No, I’m worried about Joe.”

“I understand you dated him.”

“Three times was all. Anyway, I went down to meet Jenna and she didn’t have a pistol on. I told her that it was a requirement, but she ignored me. As much as that cow must eat, she needs to obey the rules and earn her keep. I think we should put her to work in the bakery where it is good and hot and she can shed a few pounds.”

“Do you want to explain that to Joe?”

“I can if you don’t have the courage.”

“It’s not that, but I don’t want to get between him and his wife. He’s a damned good radio technician and with as many radios as we have now, we need his skills. Plus I need the farm guarded.”

“Hi, Joe.”

“Becky! I heard that you around lived here. Jenna said that you stopped by and welcomed her.”

“Actually, I just wanted to get a look at her. She used to be engaged to Jim, you know.”

“I know that she dated a Jim, yes.”

“They were engaged, Joe. We’re talking about my husband, Jim Young.”

“The guy that owns this farm? He’s your husband?”

“One and the same. Look, you’re too nice of a guy to get booted because Jenna won’t follow the rules. I talked to Gene and now I’m talking to you.”

“She said you threatened her.”

“Hardly. I just told her that the rule was you were armed all of the time. I also told her that if she didn’t comply, it would reflect badly on you and that you could possibly get into trouble with Gene. Gene doesn’t want that to happen, especially with your radio skills. You’re a valuable asset to our community. Do you understand how the co-op works?”

“Not really.”

“You fill out timecards and the profit from our operations is distributed to everyone who works. And, everyone works; no exceptions, even the teenagers and the other two pre-teens do baby sitting at times. We have a job for Jenna in the bakery. She starts tomorrow at 5am. That’s just how it is.”

Jim and Becky – Chapter 12 – Jenna

“But Jenna is afraid of guns.”

“No more than a lot of people who have had to learn to use them. Look at this picture and tell me what you see.”

“That’s Jenna before we got married. Where did you get this?”

“Want it? Take it, Joe and you can compare what you married to what you have. She was pretty, wasn’t she? Her self-indulgence and your fear of her have let her become what she is. Look at you; you look like you don’t get anything to eat. A lot of people have lost a little weight with the food shortages, but I’ll bet she gained weight. Am I right?”

“Her appetite is bigger than mine.”

“Her lazy, self-indulgent butt is bigger than yours too. Do you have any idea how much money this operation made for the people who work here? Of course you don’t, let me show you the master pay sheet.”

“But, but some of these people are just kids in high school.”

“That’s right. Those of us who work the entire year make 2 or 3 times as much. That was for 3 months of work, 2½ really. But the summer is our busiest season. The rest of the year the money comes from baking bread, grinding grain plus selling spaghetti sauce and cheese.”

“I didn’t know.”

“You do now. Do you like my shiny new red pickup? Jim bought it, but I had enough gold on my own to have paid for it and had plenty leftover.”

“That must have cost a lot.”

“\$43,800 out the door. And, I could have paid for it from my earnings working in the bakery.”

“How long?”

“Just since the war. Are you ok? You look pale.”

“Yeah, uh, how much bread?”

“We make about 2,000 loaves a week and clear \$3 a loaf. All of the profits are lumped together and distributed to everyone on the basis of time worked. You will be getting a

share based on your hours, Joe. Imagine how much more it could be if Jenna worked too. You could have a new pickup this time next year. Your vehicle doesn't even seem to run well."

"We haven't had the money to get something better."

"You want something better? Take Jim's old pickup. The only thing wrong with it is that it's old. We were going to junk it, but it has a lot of use left in it."

"I don't need charity, Becky."

"It isn't charity, Joe. It's just an old pickup that's seen better days and that we were going to junk. Leave your old vehicle in exchange. We'll get the same amount of money for it."

"Jenna will be here at 5am even if I have to drag her by her hair."

"Fine. Once you get her here, I'll take over. She's not the type of person who can be shamed into doing anything. But I guarantee you that by tomorrow night she'd be a different looking woman. Make sure she brings her rifle and ALICE gear. Just take the magazine out of the pistol so she doesn't shoot you."

o

5am...

"I'm not working," Jenna announced.

"Sure you are Jenna, put on the apron."

"Go to hell."

SLAP...

"What did you say?"

"Go to hell."

SLAP...

"What did you say?"

"Ok, but I'm not going to work."

SLAP, SLAP, SLAP...

"I can keep this up all day and to be perfectly honest, I'm enjoying myself."

"You bitch..." Jenna shouted and swung. Becky neatly sidestepped the swing and got Jenna in the left eye with a right cross, knocking her to the floor.

"I'll get you for that..." Jenna persisted, getting back up.

"Hey Jim, there's a catfight in the bakery," Gene chuckled.

"Who is it?"

"Jenna and Becky."

"Get everyone. The more humiliated Jenna is the better. Who's winning?"

"Who do you think? So far Jenna has been slapped and cold cocked in the left eye. She's going to have quite the shiner. I'll bet her ass hurts too, Becky knocked her down with the first punch."

Jenna blocked Becky's next punch and Becky caught Jenna with a left hook in her right eye, spilling Jenna on the floor a second time. Jenna got up again and Becky gave her 3 or 4 quick jabs, one hard enough to break her nose. Tears and snot were streaming down Jenna's face as she got up one final time.

"Enough," Becky announced. "Clean yourself up, get the apron on and get to work, you're no fun. At the end of the day, we're going to the range and you're staying until you can hit the target with the rifle and the pistol."

"@!)#*%^..."

SLAP...

"Had enough? Like I told you, I can keep it up all day."

"Yes."

o

"Enjoy that did you?"

"Bitch. She took a swing at me and all I did was slap her."

"The bad news is that you're the nurse and have to clean her up and fix her nose."

"I ought to just leave it crooked. You'd better get Gunny to take her to the range at the end of the day, I might shoot her."

“You’d better watch your back; she can really be a bitch.”

“I’m going to start wearing a Beretta Stampede and leave the hammer thong loose. What did you ever see in her? I know, her boobs, it sure wasn’t her brains.”

“Not them either. They look a lot bigger than they used to.”

“Let me get cleaned up and patch up the bimbo. Look at my knuckles...”

Becky checked and the septum wasn’t deviated. She straightened Jenna’s nose and packed it. She gave Jenna two Tylenol and a cold pack. Jenna was going to have 2 very black eyes. She didn’t whimper once although Becky knew that it had to hurt. Jenna noticed that Becky was now wearing a cowboy gun that was sitting loosely in the holster. The real insult came when Jenna realized that Becky was their only trained medical person. This meant that whenever she had a problem she’d have to ask Becky for help. She’d preferred to die.

Jenna had never been treated this way in her entire life; even her father and mother never spanked her. She was one of many in a generation of children whose excessively liberal parents had refused to believe the admonition, *Spare the rod and spoil the child*. Jenna began to plot her revenge. She was convinced that Joe was a wimp, not realizing that Joe was madly in love with her and would do anything not to lose her. Up to now.

o

My Fellow Americans,

Word has come to us from the reestablished CDC office in Denver of a possible outbreak of the Spanish Flu, which killed ½-million Americans after World War I. We have been able to produce ample stocks of vaccine and are prepared to vaccinate everyone. Newly born children without state issued ID cards and Social Security numbers will be issued temporary ID numbers. It is the intent of your government to vaccinate every man, woman and child in the country to prevent a reoccurrence of the tragedy of 90 years ago.

As you know, I am an interim President selected by President Cheney to fill the vacancy when he assumed the Presidency. I shall not seek, and I will not accept the nomination of my party for another term as your President. It was once said that the moral test of Government is how that Government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.

“Well, it’s happening and Powell can’t stomach it. He quoted both Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey, that last comment was the liberal’s mantra from a speech that Humphrey gave.”

“Are we ready?”

“Yes, rather than risk being unable to buy sufficient quantities of those pet IDs, we bought 50 of every brand that they make. We can't be the only people who thought of this and I'd bet that the brand the government is using is suddenly unavailable. The only question is who do we send in to get the vaccination so we'll know which ID implant they're using?”

“Nobody. Becky can pick up the syringes and we'll just check out what is in one of them. What about the identity papers you got the guy to make up, Gene?”

“Those cost me 5 Eagles a head. The hard part wasn't producing the IDs, it was getting the false data into the computer system. Once everyone is injected, he'll have to go back and update the records to add the number of the injected identifier.”

Jim picked up the blank cards you had to fill out to get the immunizations. He took them back to the farm and everyone filled one out. He would turn them in at St. Mary's and Becky could pick up the flu vaccine a day later. They would be prefilled syringes, attached to the cards. When everyone was vaccinated, he'd return the cards and the empty syringes. The government had thought of almost everything. The problem with their new system lay in the time it would take to input the ID data into the computers and the possibility for human input errors. When the data was all entered, the database would be reindexed and voila, it would be ready to track the population.

The new number would serve as your ID and debit card, but that was in the future; first the government had to find a way to explain how they could identify everyone. Becky suggested that they'd claim that it was a side benefit from an immunization tag. Someone would leak it to the press that to ensure everyone received a vaccination, an injectable tag had been used. The government now suddenly realized that there was a side benefit to the tag, a perfect means of identification. The immunization must have worked, nobody got sick. There was nothing new about the government keeping secrets.

o

“I didn't think that I'd live to see the day this happened.”

“Me either. You do know that we're going to have to pay for everything in cash now? By the way, did you get a look at Jenna? 30 more pounds and she'll look like that photo I had.”

“Did you notice Joe? He must have gained all 50 pounds. He's really looking healthy these days. I take it there's been no further problem between Becky and Jenna?”

“None. Gunny got Jenna so she can half shoot too. Becky’s still wearing the revolver, though. She says that Jenna’s been too quiet to suit her. Becky checked and everyone scans correctly, it’s just that the identifier doesn’t mean anything. After she determined that they were using the AVID system, she stored the government identifiers.”

“They mean something all right. They’re in the database under our false identities. I got a call and he told me that it was all done. What are we going to do about Linda Emory and their new baby?”

“Order another set of fake papers, Gene. We can give the guy the ID number that Becky intends to inject and he can do it all at once. Jake told me they already have the real papers. Becky filled out the card and picked up the injection, but she can’t give it to the baby until she is 6 months old and that’s not for a while.”

“Why not?”

“They’re maintaining the illusion that it is a flu vaccine. There has been one side benefit, though.”

“What’s that?”

“The illegal aliens aren’t vaccinated and don’t scan.”

“It is most definitely not worth the price, Jim.”

◦

AN ACT – To deter and punish terrorist acts in the United States and around the world, to enhance law enforcement investigatory tools, and for other purposes. This Act may be cited as the “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act of 2001”. Question – What’s this *around the world* crap? Did the United States Congress and the then sitting President declare that the world was under control of the US? No damned wonder the French and most of the world were mad at us.

Just 45 days after the September 11 attacks, with virtually no debate, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act. There are significant flaws in the Patriot Act, flaws that threaten your fundamental freedoms by giving the government the power to access to your medical records, tax records, information about the books you buy or borrow without probable cause, and the power to break into your home and conduct secret searches without telling you for weeks, months, or indefinitely.

Some of these flawed provisions were set to expire at the end of 2005. But President Bush wanted to make them permanent, and the House and Senate had been holding hearings in preparation for votes that were expected in June and July. (They extended the law on 7/29/05.) Some Patriots don’t think so much of the USA PATRIOT Act. Have

you ever heard the expression, give 'em an inch and they'll take a mile? The USA PATRIOT Act is Unconstitutional. Period. It violates at least the 1st, 4th and 5th Amendments. But, does it really stop the terrorists? Apparently not.

We have met the enemy and they are ours – two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop. – Oliver Hazard Perry September 10, 1813

We have met the enemy and they are us. – Walt Kelly. The 1971 Earth Day poster. (Image:Pogo_-_Earth_Day_1971_poster.jpg©)

The only good news about Operation Iraqi Freedom besides it being over was that fact that more journalists had been killed in Iraq than during the 10 years of conflict in Vietnam.

◦

How would this play out? The first indication that something was going on came when Joe was reactivated. It appeared that the NNG was using a different frequency-hopping mode and Joe told them which code on the disc to enter into the radios. When they began receiving transmissions, Owen was livid. Scanners were being passed out to members of the Guard and they had instructions to scan everyone to make sure they had the embedded chip. They weren't checking identities, yet. Meanwhile, Jenna was getting closer to her weight goal and was beginning to resemble the young woman she once was. Jenna had a plan and Joe being away just made it easier. After they'd gotten engaged, Jenna and Jim had, for a brief period, an intimate relationship, first suggested by Jenna. Becky never knew; it wasn't something one talked about.

"Jenna, when you get enough of the silver coins, we can exchange them for gold for you," Becky informed her.

"Do you dig your own gold Becky? Tell me something; is Jim as good in bed as he used to be?"

"Better, now that he has a real woman to sleep with. The man has hidden talents."

◦

"You slept with the bimbo?"

"It's not something I'm willing to discuss, Becky. But the answer is yes, for a while. I heard what you told her and whether you realize it or not, it was true. There is a lot of difference between simple sex and love. What is she trying to do, drive a wedge between us?"

"But you were in love with her, weren't you? You asked her to marry you."

“I thought I was at the time, that’s true. However, after you and I started going out together, I realized that I didn’t love her and never had. It was probably lust.”

“Been rehearsing your answers?”

“I honestly didn’t give it any thought. We have bigger problems; the Nevada National Guard will be by tomorrow to scan all of us for chips.”

“I’d better inject the chip in Jake and Linda’s baby and stash the real one. You can take the card to St. Mary’s tomorrow morning when you go to the farmer’s market. We wouldn’t want the card and the chip in the same location, since they don’t match.”

“What are we going to do when they come back and try to verify identities?”

“Someone is going to have to intercept the Guard before they ever get here, sweetheart. This could all blow up in our faces, you know.”

“I’m going to have real problems attacking the Guard. I’ll bet Owen will too.”

“FEMA is going to be in charge of that, it was on the radio.”

“The Federal Emergency Management Agency? Why?”

“They’re part of Homeland Security. Apparently they got tapped to verify everyone’s identity.”

“Then all of those patriot fiction authors were right, FEMA will become the enemy of the people.”

“What makes you think that they weren’t already? They’re part of Homeland Security and Homeland Security and the Attorney General enforce the USA PATRIOT Act. I just didn’t think any of this would happen this soon.”

“I hadn’t really thought about that either.”

“You leave Jenna up to me, Jim. If she comes around trying to entice you, tell me, I’ll take care of the witch.”

“Gonna scratch her eyes out?”

“Something like that.”

o

“Incoming, it’s the Guard.”

“Captain Matthews, how did you get stuck with this?”

“Owen. Somebody has to do it and I figured that if I came there wouldn’t be any abuses.”

“Do you approve of this BS?”

“I believe that it is an illegal order, Owen. If I don’t do it, you’re going to get some FEMA black shirts and you can almost count on them being abusive. You’re going to get them anyway after the first of the year. As soon as we get the scans completed and verify that everyone has a chip, we out of it.”

“Right and what happens if you get federalized and asked to support FEMA?”

“I’ll resign my commission.”

“Becky injected everyone, even the new baby we have. We’ll all scan just fine.”

“I wish I could just take your word for that. I’m sorry, but I have to check.”

“When you resign, come out here and talk to us. This is just the first step in a downhill slide.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Nothing, forget I said it.”

o

“Gene, I want to pull another trailer in for the Captain and his family. That man doesn’t know it yet, but his military career is about over.”

“I don’t own any more trailers Owen, this will have to be an outright purchase.”

“I’ll pay for it, I have more than enough. Can we do it now before the ground freezes?”

“I’ll talk to Jim and get the guys working on extending the utilities.”

“Jim, Owen wants to put in a trailer for Captain Matthews and his family.”

“We have room for several more, Gene. Why don’t you get Royce and Abel to plumb in all that we can? We could have more arrivals later. You buying the trailer?”

“Owen said he would handle it.”

"I'll talk to him and see what he plans to do. I might buy 3 more and fill some of the other spaces."

"Where are you going to get the trailers Owen?"

"Reno. A couple of the trailer parks have some new trailers they repossessed for the rent they were owed back at the time after the war. They have some sitting empty that they told me they would sell for the amount they were owed plus interest. It will make them about a nickel on the dollar."

"How many do they have?"

"Eight or ten."

"So what you're telling me is that for half the price of a new trailer I could get 10?"

"That's the size of it, yes. And, Jim, most of them are just like new."

"Let's hop in my truck and go to Reno, I want to talk to them. Give me a minute while I get some money out of the safe."

o

"I'm Jim Young. Owen tells me that you have some trailers for sale."

"That's right. We'll sell them for what's owed and 6% interest on the money."

"How many do you have?"

"12."

"Can Owen and I inspect them?"

"I'll get the keys. We changed all of the locks when they were abandoned."

"How did they happen to be abandoned?"

"People never came back after the evacuation. We have clear title, I have all of the papers."

"What about the possessions of the people that lived in them?"

"We stored them, do you want them?"

"If they're included in the price."

“I don’t see why not, the people never came back.”

o

“They’re all in very good shape, how much?”

“Which one?”

“The lot, all 12.”

“\$57,600 plus the interest. That’s 12 months lot rent on 12 trailers. After that, I took title.”

“Shall we say \$60,000, in gold for everything including the possessions?”

“You can start picking them up tomorrow. I’ll get the guys working to disconnect them.”

“We can haul 3 at a time, so it will take 4 trips.”

“You don’t fool around, do you?” Owen asked.

“At an average price of \$5,000 a trailer? Are you kidding? Gene is going to be green with envy.”

“Why do you want their possessions?”

“We can donate the clothing to Goodwill or something. However, who knows what we might find, maybe some guns or something. You didn’t permit guns during the evacuation did you?”

“No, we couldn’t risk it. Too many people in a situation where tempers could flare.”

“From the look of those homes, they were all owned by retirees. Young people tend to abuse property and not care for it like older people. Plus there were nail holes where a lot of pictures had been hung in most of them. That’s another sign the seniors owned them. Pictures of their grandchildren, etc.”

“How many homes did you buy Jim?”

“12, Gene. We’ll start towing them tomorrow afternoon. Tell Abel and Royce to get the lead out.”

“What did they cost you?”

“Sixty thousand.”

“Pretty steep.”

“For all 12 Gene, sixty thousand total, five thousand apiece.”

“Jesus, Joseph and Mary, I should have gone with you.”

“I’ve been thinking, partner. It’s only two miles between the two farms and that land isn’t owned by anyone. What would you say to putting 10 trailers on each farm and cutting a road between the two of them? We could work to secure your farm and even get some more used culvert and build you a shelter the same size as the one we have here.”

“What about the air filtration and so forth?”

“I’m sure that we can order them. What do you say? The shelter we put in was actually quite inexpensive except for the blast door and the valves.”

“What about propane?”

“We can empty Mel’s tank and move it down to your farm. There are all kinds of underground fuel tanks available and your generator is bigger than the one I have.”

“It would mean moving Jenna and Joe out of the house for my family.”

“Becky wouldn’t mind that at all. You could put them up in your trailer, they don’t have any kids.”

“Sell me two of the trailers and then we’ll each own 10. I’ll move Royce and Abel and their families down to my farm.”

“You’ll only own 9, you gave one to Ted to pay for his farmhouse.”

“I forgot. Sell me 3, we’ll have 10 on each place.”

“We probably ought to divide the livestock and keep half on each farm too. That way we won’t lose everything if something happens.”

“When do you want to do this?”

“Starting tomorrow. Tell the guys to cap the pipes right where they are and fill in the trench. They can get busy on your farm tomorrow.”

“They’ve already added 4 sites so you’ll have some expansion room. I’ll have them add 12 sites to my farm too.”

Everything that has happened to this point had to be repeated on Gene’s farm, except of course for the food operation. There didn’t seem to be much point in moving the classrooms or any of the grain bins. As with Jim and Becky’s shelter, Gene put in 4 60’

sections, in a square. They didn't put a fuel tank inside because Gene's generator was an Onan 45kw gas generator. Both blast doors were fabricated using Jim and Becky's doors as a pattern. The LUWA air system came from Texas this time. Gene's shelter was setup to sleep 40 people. Half of the livestock feed was moved to Jim's farm. None of which came easy, they were having fun dealing with FEMA. They finished Gene's farm in March. However...

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January 5th...

"Jim, I'm getting a report on the radio that FEMA is headed this way."

"Is everyone loaded up on M61AP (7.62AP) or M855 (5.56 Steel penetrator) for their rifles?"

"Passed it out last week, right after Christmas."

"Gunny, are the snipers up to speed on those Barrett's you found?"

"All dialed in Jim and they have Raufoss ammo plus Hornady 750gr A-MAX match, too."

"Where do you want to take them?"

"Wherever they get off I-80."

"Are we taking both V-100s?"

"They have 50 caliber guns; I think it's a good idea."

"I think that they'll have to get off of I-80 at exit 2. We should be waiting for them and get them as they exit. But, wait for the last vehicle and take it out with one of the Ma Deuces. How long to you figure we have to do this?"

"About 3-4 minutes tops. We'll have to be gone before anyone responds. It's about 90 seconds back to the farm after we leave. Everyone can get back to whatever they were working on and we'll play dumb. Not that I expect that to last for very long, but it will be a start."

"What are we going to do when it won't work anymore?"

"Good question. I'll be damned if I know."

"Now!"

The machine guns opened up and took out the first and last FEMA vehicle. Next, they were marched towards the center until every vehicle was thoroughly ventilated. Hurriedly they checked all of the vehicles and killed any survivors, there weren't many. They also grabbed the MP-5s and Beretta 92FSs that FEMA was armed with, elapsed time 156 seconds. By the time backup forces were beginning to leave Reno, they were back on the farm and the V-100s moving to Gene's barn. 10-15 minutes later, a second contingent of FEMA forces appeared at the farm. They checked vehicles, all were cold, and questioned everyone. They also scanned to make certain everyone had chips, but the scanners that would disclose the identities were in the vehicles with the first group and now in the safe in the armory along with the chips they were supposed to read.

Fortunately, this wasn't the only location around the country where FEMA got ambushed. One could name a state and list a half dozen or more locations where FEMA had been ambushed. It also happened in the Las Vegas area and Vegas and Reno were the two largest cities in Nevada. More people were killed in the Vegas ambush than in the Reno ambush and priorities demanded that the government concentrate on Vegas. On the twins' second birthday, February 14th, Ron Matthews, Susan and Ron and Dana moved in to a trailer on Jim's farm. Ron was an out of work stockbroker. No effort was made to replace their legal identity chips.

Although it had meant extra work, they moved Gene, Abel and Royce's trailers down to Gene's farm. By mid-February when Ron showed up, the trailers had all been set and connected. The welders were just finishing up on corner seams for the new shelter and the tunnel between the house basement and the shelter installed and covered over. Jenna didn't take well to being summarily dismissed from the house into a trailer but she didn't continue to complain. She'd put the moves on Jim a couple of times and Jim had told her to get a life, they were both married and not to each other.

Retirees, some Army and some Marine Corps, soon took the two vacant trailer spaces on each farm. These guys were mostly noncoms that either Gunny or Owen knew from somewhere. Not everyone who moved to the farms over the course of the winter were retired military, some were retired law enforcement officers. Some were also active duty LEOs, looking for a safe place to live. Some of the new residents were also members of the NNG, Joe had done a little recruiting himself. On March 15th Gene announced that all of the work at his farm was finished and not so coincidentally all 12 trailers on both farms were occupied.

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"I'm going to put in 40 acres of beans this year. You can keep the remainder of the garden up here. I can get more of those grain bins and classrooms and am trying to decide what kind of operations to put in."

"That's a very good question, Gene. I don't know that we want to move any of these operations down there."

“We don’t. I’ll put in a grain bin to hold the pinto beans and one trailer to bag them, but that won’t amount to much. I could put in a second to hold polished rice and we could bag that now that rice production is back up to normal. I was thinking about popcorn too, I can buy that in bulk very cheaply.”

“We have way too many people to have everyone working unless you put in a garden. I’m putting in 10-acres this spring; maybe you should do the same.”

“Bring the plow down and plow mine after yours is done. You can leave it and we’ll plow the 40 acres. I’m going to plow the California acreage for those beans.”

“Why 40 acres and not 60?”

“I don’t know if I have enough seed. I did learn that the reason our yield was so low was the type of seed we used. We should be able to get 2,800 pounds per acre with dark red kidney beans, 2,700 with pinto, 2,600 with great northern, 2,500 with navy beans and 2,200 with black beans.”

“You’ll need a bin for each variety and you could plant 60-acres plus a 10 acre garden without much difficulty.”

“In that case I’ll order 6 grain bins and buy 3 of the classrooms. I’m not sure what we’ll use the extra two for, possibly storage.”

“Buy seven and put the brown rice down there too. We’ll use the extra bin here for more of the durum wheat to make pasta. We’ll keep the grinding operation on my farm and the whole grain packaging on your farm. But with a 10-acre garden, you’ll have to add a canning operation there too. When you get the stoves, get 3 more dryers for the pasta.”

“How about our own label?”

“Have something in mind?”

“Two Farms brand. I’ve got the specs on what has to be on each label.”

“Sounds good to me. I’m going to grow more onions, tomatoes and potatoes; I suggest that you do the same.”

“Move over Paul Newman, huh?”

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“Jim how about we, you know...”

“Jenna, I didn’t say anything to Becky the other two times, but you need another beating. I’ll let Becky start and Joe can finish you off. Our cemetery is down by that California black oak tree.”

“I’ve never been talked to like that before.”

“Keep acting like a tramp and it will continue. Why don’t you and Joe have any kids?”

“We were checked and we’re both fertile.”

“So when Joe said that the two of you couldn’t have kids...”

“He was just covering.”

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“Jenna hit on me again. That was the third time. I told her I’d had enough and I was going to tell you. It turns out that they are both fertile but haven’t been able to conceive.”

“Jim, infertility is defined as the inability to conceive after a year of regular intercourse without contraception. Female infertility is the term used when the infertility derives from a condition in the woman rather than the man. Sooner or later, Jenna would conceive, but if she really wanted a baby, she’ll have to do some work. This might be the reason for her attitude.”

“What can they do Becky? I’m really getting tired of her.”

“I have some test kits in the shelter. All she’ll have to do is test her urine. They have a high success rate. I talk to her and give her a test kit. It’s either that or kill her.”

“I already told her where the cemetery was. I also told her that I was going to sic both you and Joe on her.”

“Hold off on Joe, I’ll work with her first, maybe if she gets pregnant, the problem will be solved.”

“If not?”

“You can tell Joe or I’ll shoot the bitch.”

“That wasn’t a very lady like thing to say.”

“When I really get mad, I might even use the ‘C’ word, just before I pull the trigger.”

“I didn’t even know you knew it.”

“Most every woman knows it, but few if any would ever use it. Mostly just a really trashy woman.”

“Don’t lower yourself to her level.”

“Fine, I’ll just shoot her in the back.”

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“I called this meeting to explain something. Gene and I have talked this over and sooner or later you’d all find out anyway. The original families aren’t injected with those identity chips.”

“But I scanned all of you, Jim. Everyone had a chip.”

“Oh, we all have chips, Ron, just not the government’s identity chips. The chips we have will scan to another identity. Sooner or later, we won’t be able to avoid the FEMA scans and then you’re going to learn our fake identities. Rather than have that happen, we decided to explain what we did.”

“They had to be the same brand of chips the government injected.”

“They were, the government chips went down in the safe. We bought all of the brands of animal ID chips that there were available on the market, assuming that one of them would be the same. We got lucky, the government used the AVID system and we have some AVID injections still left, but the identity papers were almost prohibitively expensive at \$6,000 a set. So when the rest of you moved in, we didn’t do anything about it. Now that the government has scanned everyone, the AVID injections are back on the market and we bought more. However, before we did the second injection, you would have to purchase your own false identities and have the original injection chips removed. Then we’ll attach an injection to each set of false papers if you acquired them.”

“\$6,000 a set would be quite a bit for some of the families to swing, Jim.”

“We realize that Ron, but the option is available for everyone. You do know that the injections scan but they scan to a different identity. And not everyone may choose to have the false identity papers. Especially not some of you active duty peace officers.”

“Bull crap, most of us would like them when we can afford the papers.”

“Ok but since you’re already in the system with your correct identities, you can wait until there is some reason to justify switching. See Gene about the second identities, if you really want them. If you want them, but simply can’t afford them, folks I’m sure that something can be worked out to allow you to make the purchase.”

“Does it hurt?”

“Shut up Jenna,” Joe said.

“To answer Jenna’s question, it does hurt and requires some digging,” Becky answered, “But I do have pain injections”

“I’ll just bet you do.”

SLAP, Joe backhanded his errant wife, hard enough to knock her to the floor.

“And if I hear it again Jenna, I promise that no injection will really stop the pain and don’t anyone say a word, Jenna is MY wife and I’ll deal with her.”

One of Deputy Sheriffs started to rise, but another peace officer pushed him back in his chair with a small shake of his head. It appeared that Jenna was going to be sporting a new black eye.

“To continue. Each of us has a full set of identity papers under our real names and a false identification. Our real identities have one chip’s ID and our fake identities are tied to the chip we actually injected. If we had to, we could inject the government chips, we saved them. They’re microscopic in size and are attached to a copy of the individual cards we filled out for the vaccination.”

“Now, about the firearms. If you have been to both farms, you know that we have 2 of the V-100 armored cars. The cars are equipped with M2HB and M-60 machine guns. Plus we have 2 spare M-60s. We also have 4 of the M-79s and a fair number of grenades. Most of the long arms are select fire with the exception of some AR-15s and the hunting weapons. There is enough ammo here to fight a prolonged battle if we had to. The combat weapons are FALs, M16s, AR-15s and some M1As. There are two of the Barrett M82A1M .50 caliber rifles and they are already assigned to snipers. Finally, we have a large quantity of SINCGARS radios, handheld SINCGARS called Spearheads, ham radios, business radios and handheld business radios. We don’t have enough SINCGARS for every vehicle now, but those of you without SINCGARS can use a Spearhead.”

“They can change the frequency hopping on those SINCGARS.”

“We know and we have the discs. Joe is our inside man, he’s a communications specialist with the Signal Unit in Reno. If he isn’t on active duty, one of his friends will be so we can always have the current codes. Joe is in the 422nd Signal Battalion, northern unit. Although most of their equipment is heavy communications gear, he’s our specialist.”

“Let me try and understand everything you’ve explained,” Ron replied. “What you have here is a well-armed Paramilitary unit equipped with mostly standard military gear, am-

ple stores of food and munitions and access to military and law enforcement information.”

“Right and we’re whoever we say we are, subject to the limit of our resources.”

“Is all of this legal?”

“No. False identity papers are a felony. Most of the firearms aren’t on the NFR, another felony. Not all of the munitions were purchased, another felony. We ambushed and killed a FEMA detachment on the way here to verify our identities, probably several felonies. We’ve subverted members of the Nevada National Guard on active duty, no doubt one or more felonies. We’ve broken many laws, but not all by choice. As a former Reserve Police Officer for Reno, I can tell you that it would take two days just to write up all of the charges. We’re surviving Ron in a world gone crazy.”

“And getting rich in the process.”

“By the sweat of our brow, the calluses on our hands, risk taking and creative thinking, yes. After any major disaster like the war and the terrorist attacks people are forced to fend for themselves. We weren’t in a government fallout shelter because our government didn’t see fit to build them. Neither could they adequately supply food or fuel immediately after either event. Utilities were down for a considerable period of time. We did what Gunny Highway told us to do, improvised, adapted and overcame.”

“Gunny Highway was a character in a movie.”

“That’s right, but that doesn’t make what Clint Eastwood said any less valid.”

“Immediately following the first national emergency, we were in Reno supplying food long before the government ever thought of helping people. Sure, we made money, good money. So what? We didn’t force anyone to buy from us and for the risk we ran using up our supplies and running the gauntlet into Reno we derived a reasonable reward. It was our preparedness that allowed us to accomplish that. Most, but not all, of the munitions were purchased and not stolen. You know that yourself, you helped us get some of it Ron.”

“We couldn’t defend the farm on a continuing basis for you, what choice did I have?”

“None. Neither do we. One hell of a lot of the equipment we have now was purchased with our tax dollars. It is being put to good use. However, since 9/11 the government has run roughshod on the American public. Without debating the propriety of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, allow me to point out that the USA PATRIOT Act over reached its bounds and that didn’t keep terrorists from spreading an epidemic or wiping out the government in Atlanta. Why is Powell not running for reelection? He has a belly full of the government and its tactics, that’s why. The fluid in those immunization syringes was nothing but normal saline. It was a ruse to implant those damned identity chips. Does

anyone doubt that? We barely stayed ahead of them and without some of the measures we've employed; they'd be lining us up to put us in some damned camp."

"What is your principal theme?"

"To support and defend the Constitution of the United States."

"You should run for office."

"No thank you. Do you remember Michael Douglas's speech in 'The American President'? I'll quote it.

'For the last couple of months, Senator Rumson has suggested that being President of this country was, to a certain extent, about character, and although I have not been willing to engage in his attacks on me, I've been here three years and three days, and I can tell you without hesitation: Being President of this country is entirely about character. For the record: Yes, I am a card-carrying member of the ACLU. But the more important question is why aren't you, Bob? This is an organization whose sole purpose is to defend the Bill of Rights, so it naturally begs the question: Why would a senator, his party's most powerful spokesman and a candidate for President, choose to reject upholding the Constitution? If you can answer that question, then, folks, you're smarter than I am, because I didn't understand it until a couple of minutes ago. America isn't easy. America is advanced citizenship. You gotta want it bad, 'cause it's gonna put up a fight. It's gonna say "You want free speech? Let's see you acknowledge a man whose words make your blood boil, who's standing center stage and advocating, at the top of his lungs, that which you would spend a lifetime opposing at the top of yours. You want to claim this land as the land of the free, then the symbol of your country can't just be a flag; the symbol also has to be one of its citizens exercising his right to burn that flag in protest." Show me that, defend that, celebrate that in your classrooms. Then you can stand up and sing about the land of the free. I've known Bob Rumson for years, and I've been operating under the assumption that the reason Bob devotes so much time and energy to shouting at the rain was that he simply didn't get it. Well, I was wrong. Bob's problem isn't that he doesn't get it. Bob's problem is that he can't sell it. We have serious problems to solve, and we need serious people to solve them.'

"That part was okay. However, he kept talking.

'I've loved two women in my life. I lost one to cancer, and I lost the other 'cause I was so busy keeping my job I forgot to do my job. Well, that ends right now. Tomorrow morning, the White House is sending a bill to Congress for its consideration. It's White House Resolution 455, an energy bill requiring a 20 percent reduction of the emission of fossil fuels over the next ten years. It is by far the most aggressive stride ever taken in the fight to reverse the effects of global warming. The other piece of legislation is the crime bill. As of today, it no longer exists. I'm throwing it out. I'm throwing it out writing a law that makes sense. You cannot address crime prevention without getting rid of assault weapons and handguns. I consider them a threat to national security, and I will go door

*to door if I have to, but I'm gonna convince Americans that I'm right, and I'm gonna get the guns. We've got serious problems, and we need serious people, and if you want to talk about character, Bob, you'd better come at me with more than a burning flag and a membership card. If you want to talk about character and American values, fine. Just tell me where and when, and I'll show up. This is a time for serious people, Bob, and your fifteen minutes are up. My name is Andrew Shepherd, and I *am* the President.'*

See what I mean? With Martin Sheen as his adviser, you shouldn't be surprised.

During the War of 1812, Charles Pinckney said, *Millions for defense, but not one penny for tribute.*"

Jim and Becky – Chapter 13 – Jenna’s Missing

“Some of you have problems with the ACLU, many people do. That’s because you don’t support some of the rights that they argue for. Read Andrew Shepherd’s speech again.

“About the only prohibition against free speech is yelling fire in a theatre and sedition. 20-25 years ago the ACLU, mostly Jews, defended the right of the Nazi Party to march in Skokie, Illinois, a city whose population is and was mostly Jewish, many with tattoos.

“SECTION 3. Whoever, when the United States is at war, shall willfully make or convey false reports or false statements with intent to interfere with the operation or success of the military or naval forces of the United States, or to promote the success of its enemies, or shall willfully make or convey false reports, or false statements, ... or incite insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty, in the military or naval forces of the United States, or shall willfully obstruct ... the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States, or ... shall willfully utter, print, write, or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States, or the Constitution of the United States, or the military or naval forces of the United States ... or shall willfully display the flag of any foreign enemy, or shall willfully ... urge, incite, or advocate any curtailment of production ... or advocate, teach, defend, or suggest the doing of any of the acts or things in this section enumerated and whoever shall by word or act support or favor the cause of any country with which the United States is at war or by word or act oppose the cause of the United States therein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than twenty years, or both.... (A portion of the amendment to Section 3 of the Espionage Act of June 15, 1917. The act was subsequently repealed in 1921. See 18 USC Chapter 115 §§ 2381-2390 – or read *Title 18*)

“So now they’re off defending the rights of homosexuals, etc. They aren’t defending the peoples’ behavior; they’re defending the Bill of Rights. They are also opposed to most of the provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act, so they can’t be all bad. There are a total of 27 Amendments to the Constitution. The 27th is the latest although it was originally the proposed 2nd Amendment. The original Bill of Rights had 12 Amendments, not 10.

“The second proposed amendment (“Article the second” as presented to the states) was finally ratified in 1992 as the 27th Amendment to the Constitution; it restricts the power of Congress to raise their own pay. The first proposed amendment (“Article the first” as presented to the states) is theoretically still pending before the states, but unlikely to ever be fully ratified. That amendment would regulate the method of determining the size of the United States House of Representatives.

“I totally believe in the Bill of Rights, unlike Alexander Hamilton who wrote against the Bill of Rights in the Federalist Papers (#84).

“Where is the answer? Right to Choice vs. Right to Life, etc. If the government supports one side, they oppose the other. If they support the right to life, a person with terminal

cancer could be forced to undergo treatment regardless of whether or not it could cure them. If they support the right to choice, they are in essence saying that if you don't like the sex of the baby you conceived, get rid of it and try again. They also say don't bother with contraception, you not responsible if you get pregnant, even if it's rape or incest.

"I hope you all see my point. I know how many feel and I respect that. We are free to change the law, if necessary. Meanwhile the ACLU defends what we have, whether we like it or not. Someone who burns the flag in protest is expressing his or her opinion and exercising his or her right of free speech. They should remember Newton's Laws, *for every action there is equal but opposite reaction.*"

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"These are sad times."

"They are, but the founding fathers knew that they could come. They provided an escape clause in the form of the 2nd Amendment. This is a country of laws, not men. We can work within the system for change and if that fails, force change."

"A second American Revolution? Get out of here."

"Only if we can't do it by peaceful means. When they wrote the Constitution, there were a great many reservations. There were concerns that the United States could become what it most despised. That's why we have the Bill of Rights. Anyway, enough of the talk, I think I've covered about everything. You can see Gene or me about the second identities and we'll do what we can to help. I caution all of you, not one word of what was discussed leaves the farms. We have 27 families, including Mom who is a family of one."

"I've read the Federalist Papers, Jim. In number 84, Hamilton asserted that there was no need for a Bill of Rights. The idea of adding a bill of rights to the Constitution was originally controversial. The argument was that the Constitution, as written, did not explicitly enumerate or guarantee the rights of the people, and as such needed an addition to ensure such protection. However, many Americans at the time were opposed to the idea of a Bill of Rights: If such a bill were created, they feared that it would eventually come to be interpreted as a list of the only rights Americans had. In other words, the list of rights would be the only rights one had, and if interpreted narrowly, the existence of such a bill of rights could effectively be used to constrain the liberty of the American people instead of ensuring it."

The intended meaning of the Second Amendment, and how the Amendment applies in the twenty-first century, is one of the most frequently debated topics in American politics. This debate centers on questions such as:

- Who does the Amendment mean by the "militia"?
- Who does the Amendment mean by "the people"?

- What “arms” does the Amendment protect?

Distilled to their basics, the two main competing schools of interpretation for the Second Amendment are:

Standard Model (or Individual Right Model): The Second Amendment protects the rights of an individual to own firearms. The “militia” of the Second Amendment is comprised of the armed citizenry at large, but in no way is the individual right dependent on being in active militia duty.

States’ Right Model (or Collective Right Model): The Second Amendment protects the rights of States to keep armed militias. Because the National Guard serves the role of militias, this protection does not extend to individuals.

Prior to the middle of the twentieth century, the executive branch took no general position on the Second Amendment, presumably due to there being little to no federal gun regulation. As firearms later became a political issue in America, Republican administrations tended to endorse the standard model, while Democratic administrations leaned towards the States’ right model.

The first formal written position taken by an executive branch regarding the Second Amendment came in 2004. In that year, the Justice Department under Attorney General John Ashcroft issued a memorandum opinion stating that the Second Amendment protects an individual right to bear arms. The opinion stated:

“The Second Amendment secures a personal right of individuals, not a collective right that may only be invoked by a State or a quasi-collective right restricted to those persons who serve in organized militia units.”

In 1982, a bipartisan subcommittee (consisting of 3 Republicans and 2 Democrats) of the United States Senate investigated the Second Amendment and reported upon their findings. This report included the following opinion:

“The conclusion is thus inescapable that the history, concept, and wording of the second amendment to the Constitution of the United States, as well as its interpretation by every major commentator and court in the first half century after its ratification, indicates that what is protected is an individual right of a private citizen to own and carry firearms in a peaceful manner.”

“The US Supreme Court has never directly ruled on the meaning of the Second Amendment, despite having had a variety of opportunities to do so. This has left supporters of all sides of the debate open to interpret the actions of the court as they see fit.”

“The fallacy with the States Rights Model is that the Congress voted to allow state Defense Forces.”

“I agree.”

This group wasn't revolutionary; they were patriots to the core. So far they had resisted, albeit forcefully, when FEMA came calling. Pragmatically, they couldn't fight the entire government. They could resist and when required, react. Those people with FEMA no doubt had families too. They had reacted but if they continued, FEMA would identify them as the culprits and come back in force. The strife was both external and internal with Jenna misbehaving. Some mistakes could be buried, others couldn't.

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“Here you go,” Becky said handing Jenna an ice pack for her eye.

“I don't know what's gotten into Joe lately,” Jenna mused.

“They call it backbone, honey. You don't need to chase my husband; you have a man of your own. Keep it up and Jim and I'll have a talk with Joe. From the looks of it, he won't take that very well. And if I get involved, we'll bury you.”

“Is that a threat?”

“No, a promise.”

◦

“Jenna asked Owen to teach her how to fast draw.”

“Oh really? She must be worried. Owen was the last guy she should have asked; his idea of fast draw is changing magazines quickly.”

“What do you intend to do?”

“Wait until she is getting halfway good with a revolver and then go to the range and practice at the same time that she does. I had a word with her; she knows where I stand on things.”

“When was that?”

“When I gave her the ice pack for her eye. I told her hands off and that if I got involved we'd bury her.”

“Tall words.”

“It's not really bragging if you can do it, is it?”

“I suppose not, been practicing?”

“Only since the incident in the bakery. Didn’t make much sense to carry a single action revolver if I couldn’t use it the way it was intended. I’ve seen faster in some of the contests in Reno, but if they ever resume them, I might enter. What do you intend to do about FEMA?”

“Nothing. Switch to the fake identities and let them scan us. If we ever do have to bug out, we can switch back to our real identities. I didn’t really like ambushing them like we did, but what choice did we have? Apparently a lot of others felt the same way, have you been watching TV?”

“If I turned it on right now, I could predict what we’d hear. The Israelis and Palestinians are still going at it, Germany finally went home, the price of gas is coming down and the government is up to its tail in alligators. Same stuff, different day. Did Gene and you work out what you’re planting this season?”

“He’s planting 60 acres of beans and a 10-acre garden. I got the impression that he’d plant 4 or 5 varieties of beans and put in 7 grain bins, 5 for beans and 2 for rice. They’ll pack the whole grains down there and we pack everything else here. He’ll put in a canning operation and we’ll use the empty bin for more durum what. We decided on a label, the Two Farms brand. He’s getting the labels printed.”

“How many beans can he grow on 60 acres?”

“Up to 84 tons, it depends on the variety, 30 thousand or more 5-pound bags.”

“I don’t believe it was a good idea putting in those fake identity chips, Jim. When I think about it, it goes against reason. It might be a better idea to put the real chips in and save the fake chips for when we really need them.”

“You told Jenna it wasn’t a simple or painless procedure.”

“I know what I told her, I lied.”

“And got her knocked off her chair with a black eye to boot.”

“I can’t think of a more deserving person. She might actually start to pay attention to her husband and end up pregnant like she wants. All it would take is a shot of Novocain and a minute or two to locate and remove the old chip. It probably wouldn’t take more than a Band-Aid.”

“You could have brought that up before the meeting.”

“I didn’t think of it, but now that I do, I think we should do it quietly and not let any of the new residents know.”

“Why?”

“Let’s say, hypothetically, that one of them objects and we get a visit from FEMA expecting us not to ID as the persons who are known to be on the farm. I guess I’m talking about a spy or turncoat, whatever. Well, we’d know and then we could try to ferret out who turned us in. We wouldn’t want someone like that here.”

“You have a point. I hadn’t thought about that.”

“Go get Gene, Marilyn and the kids. I’ll do them and us plus my parents and your mom. Then over the course of the next few days, I take care of everyone else.”

“Change them back? Are you crazy?”

“It was Becky’s idea and it makes sense to me.”

“She told Jenna it was a complicated procedure.”

“Band-Aid surgery, nothing to it. I’ll go first so you can see for yourself.”

It took about 10 minutes a person; a shot to numb it up, a tiny cut and the then encapsulated AVID identifier was removed. The AVID ID is located subcutaneously and the body encapsulates it and keeps it in place. The replacement went right in the incision and a butterfly bandage was used to close the wound. In less than 2 hours, 12 of the 13 people had been ‘adjusted’. Jim had watched carefully and he did Becky last. Becky took a scanner from the safe and scanned Jim’s arm. It came up ‘Young, James Stewart’; the operation was a success and the patients all lived, even Becky. Neat little gadgets, these FEMA scanners, satellite data transceiver that interfaced with the main computer, wherever it was located. They were about the size of a Motorola model 9505A Iridium Satellite Phone (13 ounces).

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Nothing was said to anyone who didn’t have the fake data chip and within 4 days, all of the fake chips were in the safe and the government chips implanted. They were high on the shoulder, above the joint and unless a person was sleeveless, no one would be aware that they’d had anything done. What was it that made Becky suggest they change the chips, some hidden instinct? Not more than a week later, they were visited by FEMA and scanned. To the surprise of everyone else, they came up with their correct identities.

“What the hell was that all about, with the fake identities?” Joe asked.

“We changed them back to the government chips, Joe?”

“Why?”

“It was Becky’s idea. Now we have to figure out if the FEMA trip was planned or if they were specifically looking for something. I suspect the latter because they had our cards; you know the ones we filled out to get the identity injections in the first place.”

“That would mean that they expected you not to be who you really are.”

“So it would seem, yes.”

“As far as I know the only people to go to Reno for anything other than work in the last week have been you and Gene, to the farmer’s market.”

“It wasn’t us, Joe, that’s for sure.”

“Then it must have been one of the others. You know someone who works in Reno?”

“Or someone else that went to Reno and we didn’t know about it.”

“Come to think of it, Jenna went to Reno on Thursday. She had to see the doctor to get some of those urine test things so she could get pregnant.”

“Well, congratulations, Joe, you’re going to be a father after all.”

◦

“FEMA was right on schedule, Jim.”

“I know, Becky, Joe jumped me about the fake identity thing. He said the Jenna went to the doctor to get some urine test things so she could get pregnant. I guess they’re planning on a family. He seemed to suggest that someone turned us in.”

“He was probably right. I’m glad I had my woman’s intuition and we changed out those chips.”

“I think that we all are, did you notice that they had those cards we filled out when we got those injections in the first place?”

“Un-huh, and they would have only had those if they didn’t expect us to scan correctly.”

◦

“What happened to your face?”

"I have no idea, let me look in the Prestor. Huh, I must have scratched myself."

"Hang on, someone's at the door."

"Honey its Joe, have you seen Jenna?"

"Not since she left the bakery this afternoon, no."

"Sorry to bother you folks, but when I got home, she wasn't there. Man, I've looked everywhere."

"I'll get Gene and we'll organize a search Joe, just be patient, we'll find her."

"I checked and her purse is there Jim, I don't know what to think."

"Did you check the entire farm?"

"Of course, there wasn't a sign of her anywhere."

"We checked all of the buildings, the grain bins and the fields, she's not here either."

"Joe, I don't know what to tell you. Do you want us to drive into Reno and look?"

"Where would you look? Reno isn't that small of a town."

"Did you call her parents and see if she was at her mother's?"

"Not there, I called and she said that she hadn't seen Jenna."

"Jim, you'd better call the Sheriff."

"Ok Becky, although I don't know that they'll take a missing person report this soon."

"We have to try, Honey."

"I'll call."

"I wouldn't bother," Gene said. "It's apparent to me that she ratted us out and took off. Probably found herself a new fella with FEMA."

"She did not!" Joe bellowed, "She wouldn't do something like that."

"Well, it wouldn't be the first time I've ever been wrong. Go ahead, Jim, call the Sheriff."

o

“They said they’d roust out some people and come search the farms.”

“I put on a fresh pot of coffee, how long before they get here?”

“About 15 minutes, it’s not a code 3. They’re bringing in a couple of K-9 units to assist in the search. Joe would you go get something that Jenna wore recently? Hang on a second and I’ll give you some latex gloves.”

“Becky, didn’t I see you talking to Jenna this afternoon?”

“Yes, right after she got off shift. I offered her a ride home but she told me that she would get a ride with someone else. I came home and checked on the kids, fed and changed them and then Jim came home. Rebecca was a big girl today; I think we’re getting close.”

“Got any cookies to go with the coffee, Becky?”

“In the cookie jar, Gene.”

“Just take one, Gene, you putting on a little weight,” Marilyn scolded.

“They’re here.”

“What the problem folks, a missing person I hear, oh hi Gene.”

“Scotty. Jenna Mason is missing. Her husband went home to get something for the dogs to get the scent. I guess Becky may have been the last person to see her.”

“I’m Becky. I last saw Jenna when we got off shift about 3:30 this afternoon. I offered her a ride home but she said she’d get a ride from someone else. I came home, fed and diapered the kids and then my husband came home, say about 4:15.”

“When did you first learn about Ms. Mason?”

“I don’t know, Scotty, I think that Joe showed up around 5:30.”

“You’re Jim Young?”

“Right, I called you at my wife’s suggestion. Gene searched their farm and we searched ours. We didn’t find a sign of Jenna.”

“Here’s the dress she was wearing yesterday,” Joe said handing the Deputy Jenna’s dress.

“Where did she work?”

“In the bakery, that’s the first classroom building. Last I saw her, she was standing out front.”

“Ok, we take one dog to your house Mason and we use the other here.”

“Our house is on Gene’s farm, it just under 2 miles. Follow me and I’ll lead the way.”

o

“It’s been 6 hours and the dogs have come up cold. If she was here, they should have found her. Sorry folks, it will be light in a while and you can keep looking. I’ve got a report from Joe Mason and we’ll add her to the missing person’s list. Let us know if you find anything.”

“See you around, Scotty.”

“Let’s all get a couple of hours sleep. We can get up about dawn and resume the search. Becky, keep the bakery going and get someone to take Jenna’s place. I’ll get someone to take the bread to Reno and I’ll help look too.”

“Let’s go Marilyn, it’s pretty damned late. Joe, we’ll be back at it at first light. If she’s here, we’ll find her.”

o

“Find her?”

“Nada. We’ve searched every crevice and corner. We even lifted up the floors in both shelters, nothing.”

“She wasn’t acting unusual, well not for Jenna anyway.”

“She’s probably in Reno. I hate to say it but Gene might be right.”

“I agree, honey, Jenna is long gone, I doubt we’ll see her again. I feel bad for Joe; didn’t you say he told you that they were planning on having a baby?”

“That what he told me, about a week before she disappeared, you remember, I said, *Jenna went to the doctor to get some urine test things so she could get pregnant.*”

“That’s right, I remember now. I pronounce Rebecca potty trained. Jimmy will be soon too. Not bad, 2 years, 3 months. Do you start planting soon?”

“Yeah, next week if everything goes right. Still wearing the six-gun?”

“Only until we’re totally sure Jenna is gone.”

“You can probably quit wearing it, honey, like I said, I agree with Gene.”

o

NRS 156.010 Presentment of petition for appointment of trustee; filing; appointment of day for hearing. If any resident of this state, who owns or is entitled to the possession of any real or personal property situated therein, is missing, or his whereabouts is unknown, for 90 days or more, and a petition is presented to the district court of the county in which his last known residence was located by any member of his family or any friend, representing that his whereabouts has been, for such time, and still is, unknown, and that his estate requires attention, supervision and care of ownership, the court shall order such petition to be filed, and appoint a day for its hearing, not less than 10 days from the date of the order.

NRS 156.020 Notice of hearing: Publication by clerk; court may direct further notice. The clerk of the court shall thereupon cause a notice to be published in some daily or weekly newspaper published in the county, at least 10 days prior to such hearing, stating that such petition will be heard at the courtroom of the court at the time appointed for the hearing. The court may direct further notice of the application to be given in such manner and to such persons as it may deem proper.

NRS 156.030 Hearing; appointment of trustee. The court shall hear the evidence offered in support of or in opposition to the petition, and, if satisfied that the allegations thereof are true, and that such person remains missing, and his whereabouts unknown, it shall appoint some suitable person as trustee to take charge and possession of such estate and manage and control it under the direction of the court.

NRS 156.040 Who may be appointed trustee. In appointing such trustee, the court shall prefer the spouse of the missing person, or the spouse's nominee, and, in the absence of a spouse, some relative of the missing person.

NRS 156.120 Person deemed missing after 3 years; administration of property; procedure. If any person owning property in this state has been absent from his last known place of residence for a continuous period of 3 years, with his whereabouts for that period unknown to the persons most likely to know thereof, he shall be deemed to be a missing person, and all property of the person in this state may be administered, as though he were deceased, in the same manner provided in this title for the administration of estates of deceased persons, subject to the conditions, restrictions and limitations prescribed in NRS 156.120 to 156.260, inclusive.

NRS 156.160 Hearing; appointment of administrator or executor; time fixed when person became missing; finding concerning death.

1. The court shall hear all evidence in support of or in opposition to the petition provided for in NRS 156.140, and, if satisfied that the allegations thereof are true, and that the missing person has remained missing for a continuous period of 3 years or more and

that his whereabouts is unknown, shall appoint some qualified person as administrator or executor in the manner provided in this title for the estates of deceased persons.

2. If the court grants the order, it shall:

(a) Fix and determine the time when the person left his last place of residence and abode and became missing and that his whereabouts has not been known continuously for a period of at least 3 years; and

(b) Make a finding stating the fact and date of death.

3. At the hearing the court may consider the testimony of any witnesses likely to know the last place of residence and whereabouts of the missing person, and may receive in evidence and consider the affidavits and depositions of other competent persons.

o

“So after 90 days Joe can petition to the court to have her officially declared missing?”

“Yes, and after 3 years, Becky, he can petition the court to declare her presumed dead.”

“That’s a long time to have it hanging over your head isn’t it?”

“As much as he loved her, it’s a very long time. Stop wearing the gun?”

“Gene and you both said that you didn’t think we’d ever see her, so finally, yes. I hung the revolver up and went back to my ALICE gear.”

“The garden is plowed and I’ll plow Gene’s tomorrow. Then, I’ll leave the tractor and they’ll plow the 60 acres for the beans. I’ll use your Dad’s tractor to disk and drag both gardens. I’ll leave the tractor and disk and they can disk, drag and plant the beans. Did Gene get enough plants started in the greenhouse for 20 acres of gardens?”

“Ask Gene, but it looks full; 20 acres of garden is going to work through those mason jars in no time at all.”

“Can you believe he bought a box car of jars? I think we have enough for about 5 years. Who did you get to take Jenna’s place in the bakery?”

“Jolene Cole, Gunny’s wife.”

“I thought you’d ask Linda Emory.”

“No, she can take better care of Stephanie in one of the other buildings, it gets awfully hot in the bakery. Look, FEMA is back.”

“You folks know the drill, present your Driver’s License or ID and your left shoulder.”

“How much longer is this crap going to go on?”

“As long as we think it’s necessary.”

“Your snitch went missing you know.”

“Who?”

“Jenna Mason.”

“Never heard of her. There are supposed to be 4 other people here, Glenda Young, James Young, Jr., Rebecca Young and a John Young.”

“Glenda is my mother, I’ll get her. The kids are in bed, sleeping, they’re babies. Can’t you just scan them in bed?”

“No, wake them up and bring them here. Let me see their ID cards.”

“Here, we’ll be right back.”

“You need to update these pictures every 6 months, these are too old.”

“We’ll take care of it, anything else?”

“Watch the attitude, mister.”

o

“This is BS, Gene. These yahoos are nothing but the damned Gestapo. They could have checked the kids in their beds without waking them up. And then the SOB told me to watch my attitude. Gave me a ration about the kids’ pictures being too old. Do you know anything about that?”

“Scotty happened to mention that the new requirement is that the pictures are updated every 6 months for children under the age of 12 and once a year for people under the age of 18. It’s worse, you have to pay for a new ID every 6 months, full fee.”

“Passports too?”

“No, thank God, they still have the same expiration dates. But you’d better check the dates on yours, and not let them lapse. They have some new rules now that make it tougher to renew if you let them lapse.”

“This country is nothing more than a police state. I said something about their snitch gone missing and the guy claimed he’d never heard of her.”

“You’re right about that. Some of us have been talking about that very thing. We agree that FEMA needs to be brought down a few notches. But, we couldn’t do another am-

bush at exit 2; they'd have to figure it was us. We were thinking something along the lines of using snipers. If we used some of the M1A rifles sprinkled among the crew and fitted them with suppressors, we could operate quite effectively. The barrels on those MP-5s are threaded too. Gunny says he knows where to get MP-5 suppressors so we'd have a lot of silenced weapons."

"What about the M-9s?"

"We'd have to swap out the barrels, but it's doable. We can get the suppressors. It doesn't make a lot of sense to advertise, so all of the guns should be suppressed."

"I'd rather have my .45 Gold Cup."

"I'll get a barrel for two of them and 2 suppressors. Hell, I'll just get all I can, whatever the size."

"Can we adapt the FALs to the suppressors?"

"Probably. Surefire was the company I had in mind and they don't make an adapter for a FAL, but I had some made by a machinist. Their suppressors run a little over \$1,600 each."

"I'll give you 4 Eagles you can get me 3 suppressors and the match grade extended barrels for the Gold Cup pistols. Let me know what they cost."

o

"What's with the suppressors, honey?"

"Becky, several of us have had enough of the FEMA BS. We're going to going into Reno or down to Vegas and give them an attitude adjustment."

"Kill them you mean?"

"Stone cold dead."

"That sure is quiet."

"I hope so; we don't want to attract attention. That's why Gene got the suppressors. I bought one for your rifle, one for mine and one for Dad's. I figure your Dad could afford his own, if he wanted them. I also bought 2 for the Gold Cups. I don't really want to use the M-9s, not enough knockdown power."

"How much did they cost?"

“\$1,600 each for the rifles and \$750 each for the Gold Cups, plus quite a bit for longer Gold Cup barrels. Then I had to pay a machinist to thread the pistol barrels. He also made up fast attach muzzle breaks for the FALS so we don’t have to use the suppressors. It doesn’t matter what they cost, money isn’t everything.”

“Easy to say now that we have some. Remember when we had to buy everything used?”

“We still buy most things used and reconditioned. None of the equipment Gene buys is new. The grain bins were new, but everything else is always reconditioned used equipment. Gene and Marilyn are fairly well off these days and a lot of that is due to his buying used. If I could get one, I’d buy a Springfield Armory M1A rifle.”

“What model?”

“Super Match. Fully loaded with optional pre-ban 20 round magazines, tactical scope, and Harris bipod are available from Springfield Armory. Several magazines, I let Jeb have all of mine.”

“Order it then, money isn’t a problem.”

“Do you want one too? They’re the ultimate in a M1A rifle.”

“Why not? Get suppressors for those too.”

“You can count on it. But actually, we can use the same suppressors and just swap them between the FALS and the Super Matches.”

“I don’t think so; get new suppressors for the Super Matches. When Gene and you are in Vegas you can pick up more of the radios, we might just as well equip all of the vehicles.”

“I’ll have to talk to Owen and see about more of the SINCGARS.”

“Ask Joe, he should be able to order them and we can hijack those too. “We might just as well equip all of the vehicles the same. Have him get 20 more radios and another 3-dozen of the Spearheads. I transferred some of my coins to the kids’ boxes, they’re pretty well set now, 72 Eagles apiece.”

“Why did you do that?”

“When Jenna went missing, I figured they blame me, I had the best motive. I didn’t want our children to suffer if that happened.”

“You accounted for your movements, why would they blame you?”

“I had motive, means and opportunity, all the things that detectives look for, right? And, I was the last person who saw Jenna alive, outside of the bakery.”

“So you assumed they’d check you out? If they did, they didn’t find anything. Guilty conscience?”

“No, no guilty conscience.”

“Then forget about Jenna unless there’s something else.”

“No, nothing else. But I do feel badly for Joe.”

“Then forget it.”

“Ok, but buy me the M25.”

“Sure.”

o

It took a while to go after FEMA, they were busy with the garden and then with canning. They ended up with a lot of their spaghetti sauce, enough so they’d be running 3 trucks to the farmers market year round. They turned down several offers from stores in the area to sell their products. Why sell wholesale when you could sell 3 delivery trucks of goods 5 days a week at the farmers market at retail? They never bothered with a booth, just set up a folding table and slowly emptied the trucks. The bread was always the first thing to sell out and the spaghetti sauce the second. With 20 acres of garden they were also thinking of adding bees. Plus one customer chided them for not having Mozzarella cheese and another wanted Romano. They got recipes and added the cheeses to their line of goods, selling a mild Cheddar, Mozzarella and Romano. They were going to install several supers the following year and produce honey.

“Gene we’re adding bees and producing honey next year. Shop around for a centrifuge to extract the honey and contact your supplier for pint jars. If you want to divide it between quarts and pints and buy another boxcar of them, you’d better make it 25-75 pints and quarts.”

“When are we starting the project?”

“After we harvest everything and get enough firewood for everyone who needs it. 20 cords should be enough. You probably want to stack 10 cords down at your place.”

“How much bread could we sell if we baked more?”

“We could bake 3 batches instead of 2 and start with about 550 loaves instead of 360. Once people got used to our having more bread, we’d have to reevaluate, I don’t be-

lieve any more that 4 batches or about 740 loaves (a batch is 192 loaves). As it is, we'll have to bake for 2 shifts."

The project ended up waiting to after the harvest was finished. It was just as well, Jim had his Super Match and Becky had the new White Feather and ample time to sight them in and get accustomed to them. Joe had met a new gal in Reno and they were dating. Nobody brought up the subject of the now officially missing Jenna. They had called AES in Vegas and ordered the radios, CBs and mobile ham radios. Gene had also ordered more of the CM300s and CP200s. Joe had been persuaded to talk to a friend and order Spearheads and SINCGARS. The friend was the Sergeant he was now dating, a widow with 2 kids. She wasn't quite as greedy as the retiring Sergeant that Owen had talked to and this batch of radios only cost a pound of gold.

o

"When is she going to move in with you, Joe?"

"I don't want to do anything that wouldn't look right, Gene."

"Who cares? You marry her if you could wouldn't you?"

"Probably."

"Then move her and her kids in. When you're legally able to, you can get married. You'll know after you live together for a time whether or not she's the gal for you or just a bed warmer. She'll also decide if you're the man she wants to spend the rest of her life with. I'd have thought that after your previous experience, you'd have learned a lesson."

"Jenna didn't have anything to do with those FEMA people."

"We're never going to know that one way or another, are we? It doesn't matter; they keep coming back like a bad cold. Say you wouldn't happen to know what FEMA uses for radios would you?"

"There was a shortage and they started using SINCGARS and Spearheads. But they use a different frequency hopping setup."

"I don't suppose you could find out what it is, could you? I might be able to see my way clear to parting with a little compensation for a disc and the correct information. Just for your extra expenses now that you have 3 more people to care for."

"Give me what it's worth, Gene, I already have the information."

"Mighty expensive having a family these days, half dozen Eagles help out?"

"Oh man, would it. But I was going to just give you the information."

“Never turn down expense money, Joe. I suppose you have lawyer’s fees getting everything settled up.”

“They published all of the notices in the paper and she would have seen them Gene, if she were alive. Jenna pulled a lot of crap when we were married, but I don’t think she’d just run off and not even take her purse or makeup. What is the first thing a woman grabs when she’s going somewhere? Her purse, that’s what. We wouldn’t leave home without our wallet and ladies always take their purses.”

“Maybe someone grabbed her. After she lost all of the weight, she became very attractive.”

“Yeah, she told me Jim was hitting on her.”

“Right track, wrong train, fella. It was the other way around. She hit on Jim 3 separate times that I know of. Jim and Becky were about to come to you about it when you smacked her in that meeting. They figured it was Jenna getting even with Becky for the beating she gave her on the first day in the bakery. It was right after that that she went on that crash diet, right?”

“Come to think of it, yes.”

o

“If we had light bars on our vehicles, we’d look like cops,” Jim laughed.

“I got the FEMA frequencies from Joe. We can program some of the Spearheads to that scheme they’re using and monitor their radio transmissions. Are we ready to go to Vegas?”

“You want to start there instead of here?”

“Definitely. You know the rule that Special Ops has about not leaving anyone behind? We’re going to need to adopt the same rule, Jim. If something happens to one of us, we can’t leave him behind. Once they identify the person, they’ll be here at the farms in a New York minute.”

“I thought we were going to avoid direct contact.”

“We are. But that doesn’t mean that one of us won’t get hurt. I want all of the sniper teams carrying a pistol and a MP-5, both suppressed. Gunny supplied us with camouflage crème and baklavas. If picked up several sets of the thin leather driving gloves, we can’t leave any prints either.”

“I’ll get Becky to put together a Combat Lifesaver bag. I guess that I’m it so far as having a medic goes, right?”

“You’re the man. We have vests, but no plates. They should be okay against the 9mm stuff, but you know yourself that a vest doesn’t always keep you from getting shot. Who are you teaming with?”

“Lance. He’ll spot and I’ll shoot.”

“What is the scope on the rifle?”

“It’s a 10x42mm Leopold Ultra M3A telescope sight, Mil-Dot.”

“What kind of range are you good for?”

“600-meters for 98%, 700-meters for 95% and 800-meters for 90% probability of a kill with M118LR ammo.”

“Don’t want one of the Barrett’s?”

“Too damned loud, even with the suppressor.”

They could get all of the MP-5 magazines they want at \$30 each, very slightly used. Slightly used MP-5 Beta-C magazines ran \$100. There seemed to be a lot of them floating around these days. There were 5 times as many FEMA agents in Vegas as Reno. After Vegas, they’d hit Salt Lake City and help out the people there. Then they’d come across on I-80 and stopped at home for a while before heading to Sacramento. After Sacramento, it was on to Fresno and then home for a time before they hit Bakersfield and the Inland Empire in southern California. LA proper had taken one hell of a beating in the war but the area in and around San Bernardino only had to deal with fallout. Finally, they’d hit Lost Wages again and returned home. The FEMA Region IX Office had been moved from San Francisco to Sacramento.

Some of the folks, who couldn’t travel because they had jobs in Reno, would keep things stirred up in Reno with an occasional attack that only took out one or two FEMA agents. This was the emerging pattern around the country according to news reports, an occasional attack, usually an ambush, that left the government employees dead and the attackers unidentified. More and more frequently the feds weapons ended up missing. This included the H&K USP Production (9x19mm, 18 round magazine), MP-5s and Remington M-24SWS rifles plus the usual assortment of riot gear including flash bangs, CS gas grenades and gas masks. Heckler und Koch was probably running extra shifts to keep up with the demand.

o

In Vegas, they set up near the airport and waited. An unmarked black Suburban eventually arrived at the airport to meet a flight. Two black shirts got out and escorted a couple of suits to the vehicle. As they exited the airport, their engine block exploded. The black shirts came boiling out and the suits stayed inside. Jim got one of the black shirts and Gunny put a .50 caliber armor piercing round through the driver's window. Jim snapped his second shot and missed, but Gunny didn't, one shirt and one suit were down. Jim relaxed, did this breathing exercise and the second shirt went down about the same time as Gunny took out the second suit. They didn't stick around to collect any weapons and they headed to St. George to link up with the others in the Virgin River Canyon.

They got as far as Nellis AFB when they hit a roadblock.

"Driver's Licenses or IDs, please.

"Young, James Stewart, Reno. What are you doing in Las Vegas?"

"Stopped in Vegas to see a showgirl I know and now we're headed to Salt Lake City."

"It says here you're married."

"Wouldn't be too smart to have a girlfriend in Reno, 8 miles from the wife, now would it?"

"Enjoy it while you can, Young. The country is adopting new moral standards and this type of behavior won't be permitted much longer. Move on."

"New moral standards? What the hell is going on now?"

"I heard via the grapevine that the Moral Majority is in control in New Washington. They plan to outlaw liquor and make sex outside of marriage an unlawful act, probably a felony," Gunny chuckled. "Ought to go over about like a fart in Church."

"The country tried that before, all it did was lead to corruption and organized crime."

"So they'll try it again. Maybe we should build a still."

"And sell the alcohol as what?"

"Cough syrup, 100 proof maybe licorice flavor."

"Remind me to ask Gene to design a label."

"Hey you two, they're pursuing us now, it's on the Spearhead."

"I've always wanted an excuse to hit this switch for pure diesel, hang on."

Jim and Becky – Chapter 14 – Rampage

“Call Gene and tell him we’re about 50 clicks out and have the pedal to the metal.”

“How fast are you going?”

“KPH or MPH?”

“Either, both.”

“90mph, 145kph.”

“Jeezus H...”

“100mph, 160kph.”

“Gene, this is Gunny, we’re beaming up. We’re 15 minutes out.”

o

“The Nevada Highway Patrol can’t follow us into the Canyon, that’s Arizona.”

“It won’t stop the feds.”

“We don’t want to stop the feds. I’ll have to slow down at Mesquite, there’s no way I can keep up this speed in the gorge. It shouldn’t be a problem; we should be at least 5 miles ahead of them.”

“Where are they set up?”

“Just this side of Littlefield, at the exit 8 off ramp.”

“Where are we stopping?”

“Just past Littlefield on the exit 8 on ramp. I’ll just stop and back up. We can pursue anyone who might get away.”

“Do you think that is likely?”

“It depends on how many vehicles they have Gunny. If we want to take out 2 vehicles, I’ll have to back to the top and let you out so you can bust out the bulletproof windshield on a second vehicle with your Barrett.”

“Do it, I don’t think they’ll bring just one vehicle. What else do we have that can stop them?”

“Are you familiar with the M-72?”

“LAW rockets?”

“There is a carton with 5 in it in the toolbox in the bed.”

“Open or closed?”

“Open.”

“I’ll grab one of those too; just get me to the top of the ramp.”

This just in... Authorities in Las Vegas report that the Regional Director of FEMA and his bodyguard, as well as 2 other FEMA agents, were gunned down today as they left McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas. Agents subsequently followed the parties believed responsible for the attack to the Virgin River Canyon between Mesquite, Nevada and St. George, Utah. Near the small community of Littlefield, Arizona, the agents came under fire a second time, this time from suspected Rocket Propelled Grenades similar to those used by the Insurgents in Iraq. Three vehicles were destroyed and 12 additional agents lost their lives.

This is one of a series of ongoing attacks that have plagued FEMA since the government implemented the implantation of the personal identity chip program, PICP. Originally announced as an immunization program, sources later leaked that the government had planted an identifying chip adapted from AVID system to identify those individuals who hadn’t been vaccinated. Subsequently, the government discovered that the chips provided an unexpected benefit in the fight against terrorists in this country. Since then, the data gathered with respect to the immunization program has been centralized and used for identification purposes and more recently for debit card transactions. This is Brit Hume and I’ll be back after this word from our sponsors.

“Hi Becky, how’s everything in Reno?”

“Are you guys ok?”

“Yeah, we’re fine. We made the news.”

“I heard. Got 16 of them altogether.”

“Keep it general, honey. Who knows who might be listening? How are the kids?”

“Good, growing like weeds and Jimmy and Becky miss their Daddy.”

“JT?”

“He could care as long as he gets his pants changed and his tummy filled. They’ll be doing the standard exercise tonight to draw attention (off of you fellas).”

“Good. We went through a roadblock and I was identified, but I don’t think it amounts to anything. I’m sure that the guys in that vehicle followed us north. According to the TV, their vehicles exploded when they were hit by RPG-7s. Gunny has been laying the law down lately, you know. Giving everyone a very hard time.”

“I’ll bet. Where are you tonight?”

“Beaver. We’ll continue our journey in the morning and probably be home in 2 or 3 days.”

“I love you.”

“I love you too, Becky. Kiss the kids for me.”

◦

The only news network besides CNN to attempt a comeback was FOX News. However, they’d been off the air for so long that they’d lost most of their regular correspondents to CNN. ABC, CBS and NBC hadn’t even tried a comeback, there were fewer sponsors and most of them had moved to CNN, too. CNN was no long the totally liberal news organization it once had been. Brian Williams and Bill O’Reilly had been killed when Air Force One had been shot down near Atlanta, killing the Bush family and others. Powell had served out the Presidency after Cheney had died in the Atlanta bombing and had retired to parts unknown, no doubt feeling duped. The new President was Dennis Cardoza (D) from Merced, California who liked the new program and gave FEMA extra authority to enforce it.

Who had ever heard of Dennis Cardoza? During his 5 terms in the House of Representatives, Cardoza had a noticeable impact on Capitol Hill and developed a reputation as an effective legislator who worked well with both Republicans and fellow Democrats. He had taken bold steps to end the death tax and support Valley farmers and UC Merced. In addition, he had launched widely praised legislation that would directly benefit the Valley and had secured millions of dollars in key appropriations for critical needs in his district. Prior to serving in Congress, Cardoza spent six years in the State Assembly, where he chaired the powerful Rules Committee and helped forge the Moderate Democratic Caucus. A broad group of organizations honored Cardoza as Legislator of the Year for his efforts to cut taxes, help family farms, and promote education and children’s safety. So was Cardoza a DINO or what? Not likely.

◦

When they got to Salt Lake City, they laid over a day before resuming their activities. Going east out of Salt Lake on I-80 took a person up one hell of a steep grade for may-

be 20-30 miles. West wasn't quite so bad; you were halfway to the Nevada state line before you were completely out of sight of the Lake. You passed through the Bonneville Salt Flats just before you got to the state line. It was a long, straight road beginning just north of the eastern edge of Wendover AF Range. Desolate. Wendover Air Field, along the Utah-Nevada border about 100 miles west of Salt Lake City, was the training site for the 509th Group prior to their mission over Japan to drop the atomic bombs in 1945. On 01 January 1979 the Hill and Wendover Ranges, and part of the Dugway Proving Ground in Utah, were consolidated into the Utah Test and Training Range and placed under the management of the Air Force Flight Test Center (AFFTC) at Edwards Air Force Base. In August 1961 the Air Force inactivated Wendover Air Force Auxiliary Field, with Hill AFB assigned "caretaker status" for the installation. Then in August 1977 Hill AFB turned over most of Wendover Air Force Auxiliary Field to the town of Wendover, Utah, retaining only a 164-acre radar site on the old base. The military career of this remote yet important airfield was at an end. Viewed from the west:

I-80 enters Utah from the west at Wendover, mercifully ending the seemingly interminable 410-mile trek across Nevada. Of course the mercy is short-lived, as the next 110 miles of Utah driving aren't much of an improvement over the previous 410. Leaving Wendover, the first exit, numbered exit #2, is for U-58, which is the old US 40 routing through Wendover. Then, in quick succession comes the Utah Port of Entry, a truck weighing and taxing facility, and then the last motorists' services for 66 miles, at the Bonneville Speedway exit. For the next 40 miles, the highway stretches, arrow straight, across the Bonneville Salt Flats. At milepost 54, is the newest rest area along I-80, opened in 1999, it's a welcome respite in this vast empty expanse. Then, the highway tops a low pass (just under 4700 feet), the only rise on the entire drive between Wendover and Salt Lake.

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Late Wednesday evening they found a spot where they could observe the comings and goings at the State Office Building. The Utah Emergency Services was located on the 11th floor. There was a fair amount of traffic in and out and the agents seemed to be gathering in a hotel bar. Gene suggested that they 'tap' a few when they left; they'd probably have a snootful and wouldn't be able to react quickly. They setup a couple of the suppressed M1As and waited. A black shirt came out and staggered towards his Suburban.

"Can't let him drive in that condition," Jim thought as he squeezed the trigger.

The man went down in a pile, his keys still in the door. A short time later, 2 more came out and by previous agreement; Jim took the guy on his left and the other sniper the man on his right. Finally the bar emptied and it was like shooting fish in a barrel. They took out 5 and beat feet back to their motel room to lie up for another day or two. Having looked at the road map, they decided that they could get trapped any number of places on westbound I-80.

FEMA threw a cordon around Salt Lake City, with roadblocks on north and south I-15 and east and west I-80. Their instructions were to detain anyone from out of the area until it could be determined why they were in Salt Lake. Jim called Becky and gave her the news, they wouldn't be home until the following week; they couldn't get past the roadblocks and weren't going to try.

"How about we change our plans?"

"What did you have in mind?"

"Denver."

"That's a long way from Reno, why there?"

"Well, I'll tell you partner, I was in Denver once on business and those folks are sometimes pretty high handed. Whole lot of self-righteous people who think their stuff don't stink same as ours. As a whole, I like Colorado, but some of those people in Denver got my goat. If we could get there and stir things up a mite, it wouldn't bother me in the least."

"How do we get there? There are roadblocks everywhere."

"Probably open up I-15 south first, figuring this attack was related to the one in Vegas. We could go back down I-15 and pick up I-70 and come in from the west. Real pretty country and we get to go through Vail and some of the ski resorts. Come the first of the week, we should be able to go south. Meanwhile, let's see the sights."

"Remember where I called you from the other night?"

"Yes, Jim, I remember."

"Look it up on a map and follow the interstate east to the next major city. We're headed there next. There has been a change in plans, and we're sitting tight for the moment. Come the first of the week or whenever travel is unimpeded, that's where we're going. After that, we'll try to get home."

"FEMA was around. Want to know where You, Gene and the others were."

"What did you tell them?"

"That you were on a buying trip trying to locate more grain for our food operation. That the others went along because each had business contacts that you were going to contact."

"What did you tell them about where we were going?"

“Well, I told them Colorado, looks like I was right after all.”

“When we’re in Denver, we’ll contract for some grain; it will be the perfect cover. How are the kids?”

“They miss their Daddy. I miss you too; be carefully and get home as soon as you can.”

“Gene wants to talk to Marilyn, she wasn’t home and he thought she might be there.”

“Marilyn, Gene’s on the phone. She coming, I love you.”

“Love you too, honey.”

◦

“Marilyn told me that Scotty called. Jenna’s case is being dead-filed, missing and presumed dead. They haven’t had a hit on any of the ID registers since she disappeared.”

“I’m not surprised; I half figured she was dead.”

“Why?”

“Something I saw. Never mind, it’s not important. Ever tour the Temple?”

“My kind of people, preparedness freaks. Nope, never been there.”

They don’t show you everything, but it’s interesting, fancy Church. That office building next to it houses some of the Church’s offices.”

“Why don’t we drift out one vehicle at a time once they open up I-15 south? Four vehicles in a group with Nevada plates might set off some alarms.”

“Suits me.”

◦

“I don’t know, Marilyn, let’s just say that I think Jenna is long gone. Why she might have left could be anybody’s guess. I had an idea that she might have used going to Reno for those urine test kits as an excuse to contact FEMA, the reason being that I gave her a whole carton from the shelter. Maybe it finally dawned on her that her secret was out as far as I was concerned and she lit out while the going was good.”

“I don’t buy it, Becky. If she’d have left of her own volition, she’d have taken her purse and cleaned out their lockbox in the shelter.”

“But they looked everywhere.”

“That doesn’t mean that she’s not still here, 6’ deep.”

“It’s always a possibility, I suppose. I thought that the Sheriff’s Department would pay closer attention to me; I had motive, means and opportunity.”

“Gene says you were a person of interest but that they dismissed it because you didn’t have time to bury a body.”

“You saw us at 3:30 in front of the bakery. Jim got home at 4:00, maybe a little after. I’d have had to been some kind of Houdini to kill her, bury the body and get home in time for Jim. And didn’t Joe say her purse was at home?”

“That’s what the Sheriff’s office concluded. Yes, her purse was on the kitchen table in their trailer.”

“So, in addition to killing her and burying the body, I’d have had to go to your farm and left her purse, all unnoticed by 10 families? I must be Wonder Woman too. Give me a minute and I’ll call for my invisible plane.”

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Meanwhile in Salt Lake, FEMA was conducting door-to-door searches, starting with the motels.

“I see you’re from Nevada, what are you doing in Salt Lake?”

“We’re on our way to Denver, we’re on a buying trip. Maybe you’re familiar with our Brand, Two Farms?”

“What do you intend to buy in Denver?”

“Grain, wheat and corn primarily. The remainder of our party is in the other rooms. There are a total of 16 of us, some driver’s and some grain specialists. We also need seed; we grow a lot food for Reno.”

“Why are you here and not in Denver?”

“That’s your fault. We got in and laid over a day and then there were those awful shootings. Well, you bottled up the city and the word is that you were looking for out of state residents. We figured we’d just wait here until you cleared us and gave us a pass.”

“How many vehicles do you need passes for?”

“We have 4 vehicles, 4 men per vehicle.”

“Which rooms are you in?”

“This room and the next 3.”

“Dig out you ID and I’ll issue a pass for this room. We’ll take each room on a case by case basis.”

◦

They each got a pass, one for each vehicle with the 4 identified occupants. They decided to take I-80 instead of going the long way, the passes cleared their way. Once they arrived in Denver, Gene and Jim contracted for primarily wheat and corn, to be delivered on an ongoing basis over the course of the following year. With their cover established, they began to look around to see what FEMA was doing in Denver; the long and short of it that nothing was happening in Denver that required their attention.

“Ready to return to Reno?”

“Might just as well, nothing is happening here.”

“I figure about 1,000 miles to Reno.”

“And, I looked it up, 1,050. Want to drive straight through?”

“If we can, how long?”

“We could drive it in 16 hours, if we wanted to burn up fuel. Let’s go slow and try and keep our consumption down. Figure about 21 hours. We drive in 3 hour shifts and drive all the way home. If we fuel up here, we should be able to fuel again in Salt Lake and make it to Reno.”

◦

A surprise was waiting for them when they got home.

“Hey, little brother.”

“What are you doing here?” Jim asked, totally surprised.

“Kansas isn’t the same anymore, not since the government moved Washington there. Jim and Hazel are here too.”

“Where are you staying?”

“Mom moved in with Ted and Sally and we moved in with you. I’m going to need a trailer. Jim and I sold out everything, lock, stock and barrel.”

“Where are Jim and Hazel?”

“They’re with the other grandparents for a night or two until we can bring in more trailers and get them set up.”

“How many do we need?”

“More is always better, little brother.”

“Get Owen to take you into Reno, Jeb. He knows where all of the repos are. I bought a dozen for 5 grand apiece. I guess I should have kept the 3 that I sold to Gene.”

“Get some sleep, we’ll get them.”

At \$5 thousand each, Jeb figured he’d better buy one for him and Mandy, a second for Jim and Hazel and third for his Mom. If they need another later, Glenda could always move back in with Jim and Becky. Becky introduced him to Owen and the two of them went to Reno where the man who owned the lot had 4 and told him it was all or none. Owen and Jeb bought all 4 and were told to pick them up the next day. Glenda said she wouldn’t live in a trailer by herself and when Gene woke up he offered to buy the extra 2 trailers.

“You can never be over prepared, Jeb. If I take those off your hands, it will just improve our labor force. Let me explain something I really believe. You will always need to have an alternate source of power and enough fuel for 3 months. What if you got stuck in a shelter for 100 days? What if you lived in New Orleans or on the Gulf Coast back in 2005? Hell, 3 months would be just a drop in the bucket.”

“I paid \$5,000 apiece for the trailers.”

“At least the price didn’t go up. I wonder who disappeared this time.”

“The guy told Owen and me that FEMA grabbed some people and they hadn’t let them go in 12 months.”

“What did they grab them for?”

“Having false identities.”

“No chit? I guess Becky’s woman’s intuition saved our butts then. We implanted unofficial identity chips but about a week before someone snitched us out, she suggested that we switch back.”

“Who’d do a thing like that?”

“Most folks think that it was Jenna, Joe’s wife; right after FEMA showed up and was terribly disappointed, she up and disappeared. Speculation was she ran off to Reno, but no one has seen hide or hair of her. Others think she’s dead. Becky can tell you about it, she was the last one to see Jenna.”

“Then you don’t really know if she was the one who turned you in or not?”

“Can’t prove it if that’s what you mean.”

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“Tell me about Jenna, Becky.”

“What do you want to know, Jeb?”

“Gene said you were the last one to see her, was she the one who ratted out the farms?”

“There’s no way I could know something like that, but I agree with the others, she was probably the one. She was the woman who your little brother was engaged to, you know.”

“The same Jenna? I’ll, be darned.”

“She got fat and lazy and refused to work. She and I crossed swords more than once. I didn’t much care for her, I can tell you. She went to work in the bakery, lost weight and when she got her figure back, started hitting on Jim. Even went so far as to tell her husband, Joe that Jim was hitting on her. She went too far and we were about to cross swords again when Joe smacked her and more or less put her in her place. That was during the meeting that we had where Jim and Gene disclosed to the newer residents that we all had false identities. A week later FEMA showed up and a week after that, she up and disappeared.”

“What happened to her?”

“Why ask me, I have no idea. She could have run off, or for I know she’s buried in the garden, 6’ under.”

“Where were Jim, Gene and the others?”

“Officially or actually?”

“I’m your brother-in-law.”

“Officially, they were on a buying trip to Colorado. Actually they were on a road trip to put FEMA in its place. That business in Vegas, Littlefield and Salt Lake City was some of their doing.”

“Are you talking about the ambushes we heard about on the radio?”

“Yep.”

“How many did they take out?”

“You’d have to ask Jim. 4 in Vegas, 12 in Littlefield and I don’t know how many they got in Salt Lake.”

“Eight, Becky,” Jim said, “Is there any coffee?”

“Four in Vegas, 12 in Littlefield and 8 more in Salt Lake City, 24 altogether. Did you find homes, Jeb?”

“I bought 4 but Gene is taking 2 off my hands. Mom insists that she’d rather live with you.”

“Are you picking them up tomorrow?”

“That’s what he said.”

“We use the delivery trucks to move the mobile homes. Come with me to the farmer’s market tomorrow and we’ll pick up 3 after. On the following day, we can pick up the other one.”

“Will you have the utilities in?”

“They’re already stubbed off, Jeb. All we need to do is extend them.”

“Did you get their possessions too?”

“Owen didn’t say anything and frankly, it never occurred to me.”

“We’ll have to ask when we pick up the homes if that includes the possessions.”

“Why would we want them?”

“A lot of the retirees that live in Reno are Western shooting aficionados; we got a bunch of weapons when we secured their possessions too.”

“It didn’t occur to me, like I told you.”

“Have you paid for the trailers?”

“The terms were COD.”

“Fine, we tell them that you understood the purchase included the possessions and if it didn't, you're backing out.”

“We need the trailers.”

“He wants the money, you'll get the possessions.”

Jim was right; the guy wanted the money, not the possessions. Two trailers were towed to Jim's farm and the other to Gene's. It only took Royce and Able a short time to put in the extended utility lines and the homes were set 24 hours after they were picked up. They moved to Gene's to plumb the other two trailers. By the time Jim, Jeb and the others were back from Reno on the second day the two trailers on the farm were set and installed and the one at Gene's was installed. Royce told Jeb they'd set the other one the next day and that Gene was out recruiting more families.

With only a light dusting of snow, they spent the better part of the next few months lying in a store of firewood, 200 cords or more. Gene had a canning operation set up in one classroom; a whole grain packing operation in a second and the third was used to store the Two Farms brand labels and packaging materials. When weather permitted the garden was graded to level it and improve the irrigation. It made the 4' of dirt 6' deep in parts of the garden.

“You planting beans this coming year?”

“I thought I might just as well, provided I limit myself to the varieties that produce at least 2,500 pound per acre. What are you going to plant besides your garden?”

“Corn, barley and oats to grind into livestock feed. I'm going to put Jim Robins in charge of the farming and give Jeb oversight of the food production.”

“What are you going to do?”

“Sell groceries as always. Both you and I need to maintain a visible presence, Gene. We used our buying trip excuse enough that I expect them to check us out eventually. Mom is retiring and will watch the kids while Becky works in the bakery. I don't suppose you have any more time cards do you, we're getting low.”

“Nah, but we can get them at any of the office supply stores.”

“We should put in real time clocks instead of just have people noting their time.”

“I only have one so we'd have to buy a second.”

“Keep it for your farm and I’d get a clock for here and a case of timecards.”

“Works for me.”

Their road trip seemed to be the catalyst to get the ball rolling. FEMA continued to come under fire, literally, not figuratively, and they eventually pulled back. There didn’t seem to be any point to pressing the issue of identities, everyone had the chip embedded or was in a camp somewhere.

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“Honey, how did you know that we needed to swap out those fake identity chips?”

“Jim, I wasn’t sure, but it was something that Jenna said about getting even with everyone.”

“I wonder what did happen to Jenna.”

“I don’t. I know exactly where she is.”

“Explain that to me.”

“I’d rather not, what would you think of me?”

“I’d think that you did whatever the situation called for. Tell me where Jenna is.”

“In the garden, about 4’ under. She came at me with a knife and I grabbed her wrist and somehow managed to turn it and she got stabbed.”

“You just made it worse by disposing of the body, why did you do that?”

“Because she used my knife. Grabbed it right out of the sheath and tried to stab me with it. I didn’t think that anyone would believe me. There was a hole in the garden so I threw her in and used the tractor to cover her over. I don’t want anyone to think I murdered her.”

“Did you?”

“Of course not, I defended myself. If you don’t believe me, what chance do I have that others will believe me?”

“I think maybe we’ll just leave her buried. Joe is getting on with his life and under the circumstances there’s nothing to be gained by digging her up. Still with Jenna dead, we don’t know who ratted us out.”

“But we do Jim. That’s what I said that triggered her behavior. I made a remark that I had proof who turned us in and she grabbed my knife.”

“What kind of proof?”

“I gave Jenna urine test strips from the shelter so she could monitor her hormone levels. She didn’t go to Reno to get them because she already had them. I’m so sorry this all happened.”

“It’s spilt milk, Becky, try to forget it. You’ll need to show me where you buried her body so I can make sure the bones never surface.”

Jim had to think about Becky’s claim. She had taken to wearing a 6-gun, a Beretta Stampede, in a low slung right-handed rig. She carried a large razor-sharp Bowie on her left-hand side in a reversed position. To someone standing directly in front of Becky would appear to be facing him or her with the blade forward. It would have been a simple matter for Jenna to grab the knife and try to stab Becky. The only way he could know for certain would have been to examine the body immediately thereafter. Several months in the ground would have allowed the body to decompose to the point that such an endeavor would not be possible. After much thought he decided that he would keep the secret. The animosity between Jenna and Becky was well known, although few took Jenna’s side.

“Honey, I thought it over. Show me exactly where the body is buried and I’ll see if I can grade in more fill to bury her deeper.”

“Then you do believe me?”

“I thought about how you carried the Rambo III Bowie. Your explanation is totally logical. Besides we now know that the bad apple isn’t in the barrel any more. Joe is very happy with his new girlfriend and he potentially has a couple of stepchildren. I’ve known you for a very long time and you’ve always been honest with me. I knew Jenna too and that’s just the kind of low down stunt she might pull if she were angry. Your secret is safe with me. Now forget it before someone says something and you react in a manner that will give away our secret.”

“I agree, but only if you’re 100% sure.”

“I’m sure.”

“You do know that if I was going to kill the witch I’d have used a gun don’t you?”

“I figured as much. It would have been better if you’d have pulled your gun and shot her and left her holding the knife. No one would have blamed you, of that I am certain.”

“Are you planning on going back on the road soon?”

"I don't think so, no. We couldn't do anything in Denver and if we start showing up in too many places where FEMA people get killed someone is going to put 2 and 2 together. Besides with Jeb and Mandy plus her parents here we have to reconsider the division of labor. I understand that Jim was quite the farmer. Maybe he can figure out what to do with our extra 40 acres."

"Gene raised beans, how about you trying corn, or better yet, corn and oats so we can grind our own livestock feed?"

"If he is going to grow beans next year, it might be a good idea. Half and half would give us 50 bushels of oats and 1,000 plus bushels of corn. We might be able to produce all of the feed we need. By the way, while we were in Denver, we signed one-year contracts for hard white wheat and durum wheat so we'll have the ingredients for bread and pasta. One other thing before I forget it. If anyone from FEMA asks you about my having a girlfriend in Vegas that's the explanation I gave them for being in Vegas. I told them that it wouldn't make much sense having a girlfriend in Reno with my wife just 8 miles down the road."

"Girlfriend? What's her name?"

"Mary? Jane? Kathy? Marie? It was just a yarn. You could always admit to being suspicious but it wouldn't do for you to know too many details."

"What's the girlfriend look like?"

"Long legs, big hooters and likes kinky sex. How the hell do I know?"

"Maybe you should sleep on the sofa for a couple of nights to lend credence to the story."

"Yeah right, punish your alibi."

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"I buried her right about there."

"Good, I've already graded in extra dirt so I won't have to change anything, our late friend is 6' under."

"I still feel bad for Joe, you know."

"Don't worry about it Becky, he got a winner this time. The two of them must have needed each other; Joe has been smiling most of the time lately."

"So is that the end of it? I can quit looking over my shoulder?"

“I’d say so, only you and I know where the body is buried.”

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“With FEMA pulling back, what now?”

“We’re going to try and have as normal a life as possible under the circumstances. We have 2 farms totaling 160 acres with 120 acres under cultivation this coming summer. I think that we’ll have more than enough work for everyone. And, now that we’re up to 14 trailers on each farm, the security is a lot better.”

“Are you still worried about security?”

“Always, Becky. Now that we have so much food stored with all of the grain bins and have ample fuel stocks, we’re just that much more vulnerable. I’m just afraid that one of these days we’re going to have to pay for all of the deals that Powell made when he was President. He closed both borders as part of the elaborate plan that FEMA had put in place to get everyone identity chips. It’s strange that we don’t hear any more about the problems on our southern border. In fact there is almost no news coming out of New Washington.”

In light of Hurricane Katrina and the devastation wrought on the Gulf Coast, America was ready when WW III occurred and equally prepared when the terrorists struck. The media had a field day casting blame; there was more than enough to go around. It started at the lowest levels and worked its way to the top although if you believed Wolf Blitzer the storm was President Bush’s fault. In truth, most of the blame lay with Congress. The government had put a 3 star General, Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré, a black man from the Gulf Coast in charge of the military response.

His wide variety of assignments included tours in Korea and Germany. General Honoré was the Commanding General, 2d Infantry Division, Korea; Vice Director for Operations, J-3, The Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.; Deputy Commanding General/Assistant Commandant, United States Army Infantry Center and School, Fort Benning, Georgia; and the Assistant Division Commander, Maneuver/Support, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. He has also served as the Brigade Commander, 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Georgia; Senior Mechanized Observer/Controller, “Scorpion 07”, National Training Center (25 Rotations); and Commander, 4th Battalion, 16th Infantry Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, Germany.

General Honoré’s awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (four Oak Leaf Clusters), the Bronze Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (three Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Commendation Medal (three Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal (two Bronze Service Stars), Armed Forces Expeditionary

Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal (one Bronze Service Star) the Global War on Terror Service Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon (4), Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi), the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait) and the Joint Meritorious Unit Award. Qualification badges include the Expert Infantry Badge, the Parachutist Badge, and the Joint Staff Identification Badge.

If nothing else, Honoré made the point that even propositioned, the assets still had to travel to New Orleans and other places. Did many people hear about the 117 bed mobile hospital that was stuck in some out of the way corner of Mississippi because of local politics? Funded by FEMA and built after 9/11, the hospital was complete with a lab, imaging, and a well-trained staff. I know, blame Bush and FEMA...

“That’s BS. It’s BS,” Honoré raged.

“I can tell you that’s BS. We have got 300 helicopters and some of the finest EMS workers in the world down there.”

“There is no red tape... there are isolated incidents that people take to paint a broad brush.”

“You need to get on the streets of New Orleans; you can’t sit back here and say what you hear from someone else.”

“It is secure; we walk around without any issues. Why the hell are you trying to make that the issue, if you can help, get there and help?”

General Honoré, if you’re trying to say something, spit it out, sir, don’t stand on ceremony.

The Mayor of New Orleans couldn’t be reached for comment; he was composing another caustic set of comments about federal authorities. He just ignored the fact that New Orleans wouldn’t even have been evacuated except Bush declared an emergency on Saturday, before the storm hit, and had all but ordered him to evacuate the city. The Governor of Louisiana couldn’t be reached for comment either; she was having a bad hair day. It started when she waited 24 hours to activate the National Guard. She claimed she couldn’t do it because a few of the troops were in Iraq. The Mayor was saying 10,000 people were dead. It would have been less, of course, except for the federal incompetence. The best defense is a good offense. The Mayor was very offensive. Bush po’d him when he made him evacuate New Orleans ahead of the storm.

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In fact there was an unofficial media blackout in the form of stonewalling from the new Capitol. The US was faced with several problems, some more immediate than the others. For example, having sealed the borders had caused Mexico severe problems. While the US was still recovering from the brief war and the terrorist attacks, they had

been effective, at last, in sealing the southern border. The President of Mexico demanded aid for their starving millions. Demanded, didn't request. One of the far-reaching consequences in the US was the dire fuel shortage, especially following the terrorist attacks. Little, if any, imported fuel was available. As the US scrambled to open the California oil fields and the second Alaskan oil field needs were met on the basis of priorities. The military and the transportation industry got most of the fuel. Lesser quantities were available to food producers and suppliers like the people on the farms south of Reno.

The fraudulent means by which the government had sought to implant the identity chips was coming back to haunt them. The citizenry of the US wasn't taking the government's underhandedness lying down. If the farm had seen fit to send 16 men on a road trip, imagine how many other groups were doing the same thing. This had forced the central government to retire the FEMA staffs from the field and as a result, people were being freed from camps. It didn't really matter; the first thing they did when they got you to the camp was implanting an ID. Local authorities, like the Washoe County Sheriff and the Reno Police Department were now refusing to check for the IDs.

The bad guys that had hit the farms in California a year before were out of sight, probably laying low. Thus the security issues that faced the 2 farms just across the state line in Nevada hadn't changed. The water tower that had been constructed on Jim and Becky's farm became the pattern for a similar structure on Gene and Marilyn's farm, as did the encircling defense ditch. It was just a shame that the trouble wasn't over, they'd been through quite a bit of surviving to date. What the farms lacked in quantity of attacks by MZBs would eventually be made up for in the quality of the future attacks.

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"We need to do something beyond the farmer's market, Jim. As much food as we're moving into Reno on a daily basis, we are going to have to turn to something like a grocery warehouse."

"That could get complicated, partner. Elaborate."

"I can still re-lease the building where my wholesale business was. It is a large warehouse and we could use it to store the food we're producing. It would require far less fuel to move the finished goods to the warehouse with a semi than it takes hauling them in daily 3 truckloads at a time."

"That warehouse wasn't that secure. In normal times, it was adequate but if we begin moving all of the finished goods into that location, where are we going to get security?"

"We can start with the Police Department and use our own internal security force. If we use only the folks who have the guard training, it won't be difficult to get the authorities to approved armed guards."

“I don’t like it. We would be dividing our forces.”

“We have about 8-10 times as many people now as we started out with. Besides with the water towers and a V-100 on each farm, our personal security isn’t that big of a problem.”

“Go ahead if you must. If you want to run the operation in Reno, I’ll take over both operations on the farms.”

“If we start grinding, flaking and bagging grain 24/7, we can put out about 7 tons a day of ground grain and another 7 tons of bagged beans and rice.”

“Where are you going to get the raw materials? At an average yield of 2,600 pounds per acre on the beans, you could bag a whole crop in 2 weeks.”

“I was going to suggest that you also put in 60 acres of beans, Jim.”

“Great we’ll have enough to last for a month. Then what?”

“I located a larger grinding mill, a 30” Meadows Stone Burr Mill. It can grind at the rate of 750-1,000 pounds per hour. I also located an additional classroom to assemble on your farm. I contracted for enough wheat while we were in Denver that we have to do something to clear the storage space. You can expect 3 semi loads of wheat every week from now on. I was going to suggest that the pasta operation be operated out of its own building.”

“Do we really have enough people to staff an operation of that size?”

“If the only operation we run 24/7 is grinding and flaking, yes. We can continue to run 2 shifts in the bakery and one shift in the other operations. We can use the 24” mill to grind the durum wheat and the 30” mill to grind the wheat that we use for bread and our general-purpose flour. The contract specifies one load of durum and two loads of hard white wheat every week.”

“I wasn’t sure what we wanted to plant, but I had only figured on plowing an additional 40 acres.”

“We’ll both need 70 acres under cultivation to meet the demand. You plant the tomatoes and I’ll plant the potatoes.”

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As all things must end, so ends the first part of this story. If you’re prepared, there isn’t much you can’t survive. People who can’t evacuate have to make plans to stay in place. Even if you have a million dollar shelter, it might not do you any good, without a snorkel. Stay tuned while the continuation of Jim and Becky gets organized.